

# IDEALS IN PRACTICE



COUNTESS ZAMOYSKA



2093 LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA  
SAN DIEGO

24/10



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

R. Ellis Roberts

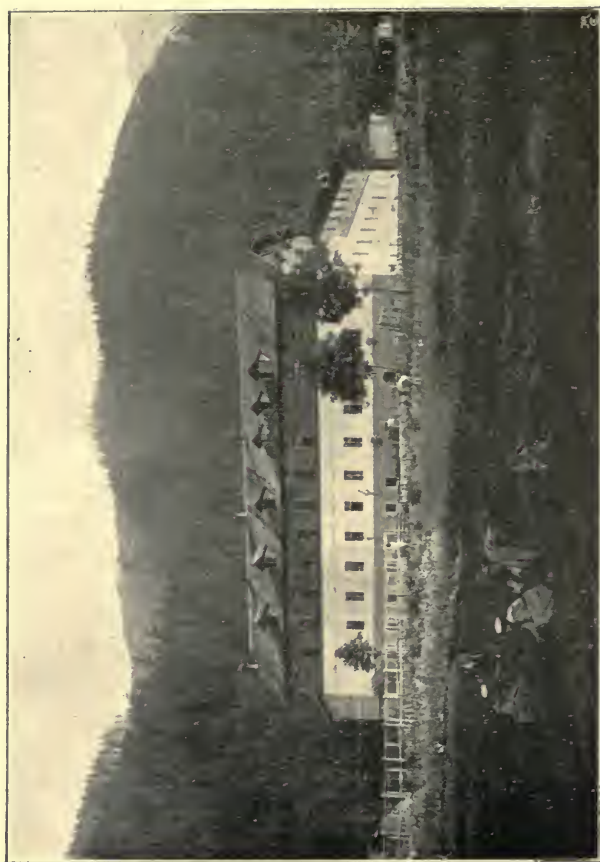


# IDEALS IN PRACTICE

# THEORY OF PRACTICE







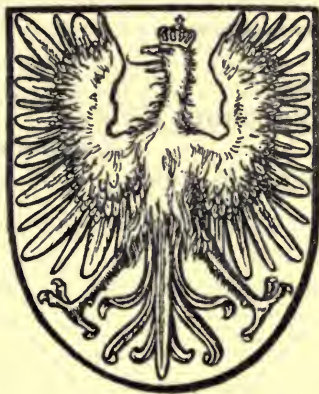
SCHOOL OF DOMESTIC ECONOMY, ZAKOPANE

*Front.*

#53782

# IDEALS IN PRACTICE

With Some Account of Women's Work  
in Poland ▯ By the *Countess Zamoyaska*  
Translated from the French by *Lady*  
*Margaret Domvile* ▯ With a Preface  
by *Miss Mallock*



LONDON: ART AND BOOK COY  
22 Paternoster Row, E.C. ▯▯ m.cm.iiij

Nihil obstat:

BERTRANDUS WILBERFORCE, O.P.

3<sup>o</sup> Septembris, 1903.

Imprimatur:

✠ EDUARDUS ILSLEY,

*Epūs Birminghamiensis.*

12<sup>o</sup> Septembris, 1903.

## PREFACE



A FEW hours by rail from Cracow, at the foot of an outlying spur of the Carpathian mountains, lies the little mountain resort of Zakopane; and here for many years an educational work has been in progress about which, as is the case with many good things, much less is known than ought to be.

It is now more than twenty years since, that the Countess Zamoyska, the author of the present volume, became convinced that no greater help could be given to Poland than by engrafting, if this were possible, on the Polish national character certain qualities—such as discipline, order, industry, patience and perseverance—in which it is naturally deficient, and to the lack of which many of the national calamities might be traced; and as a means to the accomplishment of this object, she looked to the training of young girls—the mothers of the coming generation—in just those habits of study, occupation and steady thought which were lacking to them; more especially, to the rooting out of their minds of the over-weening contempt and impatience of work of any kind, which is, it seems, a strong Polish characteristic.

It was for this object that the school of domestic economy, now flourishing in Zakopane, was established; and here, in this school, the theories have been tested and the experience in great part gathered, which we find epitomized in the little treatise, entitled in Polish *O Parcy* (On Work), which is now for the first time placed before an English-speaking public.

A great deal of talk is to be heard in these days about "workers"—about people who suffer because they cannot get enough work, and people who suffer because they get too much of it; but of work *per se* much less is commonly said; and it is work in this aspect—as being not a productive factor merely, but an ethical factor as well—that Madame Zamoyska has in mind; her treatment of it being as suggestive and as original as it is in the strictest sense of the word scientific.

The stress laid in the present volume on this *ethical* function of work, is a point which should be noted, because it is just through this, that both her objects and her methods have come to differ in certain ways from those ordinarily prevalent.

Work for most of us thus figures as something which has to be got through in order that we may get something else instead of it—money or money's worth, knowledge or power—and as a rule it is only for some such ends that it is either taught or undertaken. There is, however, another estimate of work—an estimate which is a truly

scientific as well as a truly religious one, and which is of a much juster kind. There is no fact to which science points more clearly than to the mutual influence of hand and brain work on the development of the human organism; and there is no view of the primeval sentence of labour upon the human race which harmonizes more completely with Christian faith and practice, than that which sees in it, not a law of life only, but a law of growth and progress; and it is the full recognition on Madame Zamoyska's part, of the double function thus exercised by work, which gives to all she has to say upon the subject a value to a great extent *sui generis*.

Of the two functions of work above mentioned, its immediate, or productive, function is never in any danger of being forgotten, while its ulterior or educative function, on the other hand, is not only apt to be overlooked, but, under pressure of necessity, greed, or commercialism, is generally lost sight of altogether. On this latter aspect of work, the present writer is, therefore, careful to insist; for work of whatever kind, as she regards it, both can, and should, perform this dual office, and in as far as it falls short of so doing, it is the result of energy wastefully applied.

It is owing to this special character of Madame Zamoyska's aim that the school at Zakopane, begun in the first place to meet a crying need on the part of her country-women, has come to take a definite shape of its own; and has grown not merely into one among many excel-

lent schools of domestic economy, but, in addition to this, into a school for the formation of Christian character, under present day conditions of life, and along certain determinate lines. What it aims at offering, is a preparation for the particular needs of the common life, corresponding in function to the novitiate which precedes the religious life—such a preparation, in fact, as in this present specializing age has come to be a necessity for all persons entering on any professional employment whatever.\*

As applied to the multifarious and often complex obligations which most people have to face, the aim of the school is to fore-arm its pupils against difficulties, and to place at their command all the means required for discharging the duties of their calling, and for sanctifying their own souls in the process.

The line taken by Madame Zamoyska throughout the present volume is clearly indicated by its commencement :

That we owe obedience to all God's laws ; that to consider His commandments and keep them is our imperative

---

\* In Madame Zamoyska's own words : " The necessity has long been acknowledged for having special schools of medicine, agriculture, painting, etc., where the instructions are not only theoretical but also practical ; and yet the science of a Christian life is taught only from the pulpit and confessional and out of books. There is not at present institutions where the laity can be taught by practice this essential science, and it is this want which has suggested to us the idea of making our own house in some sort a school of practical Christian life both for ourselves and for those under our roof."



duty, we all readily admit, yet how little thought is habitually given to His first great ordinance to man, that he should earn his daily bread in the sweat of his brow! Although the great Taskmaster has left us, in the fulfilment of this as of other duties, a large measure of choice and freedom of will, He has, on the other hand, shown how much importance He attaches to this duty in particular, by making mankind as a whole so dependent on the results of work that without it the race could not exist.

A division is next made of work into three classes—manual, intellectual and spiritual—and in the three corresponding divisions of the book each of these is treated both separately and in its connection with the others.

In working with our hands [says Madame Zamoyska] it is a divine order that we are obeying; not only so, but we are, in our measure, copying the creative work of God—when we force ourselves to do the smallest of our duties with precision, we are carrying out His command.

Both for the sake of its theory and its practice this chapter on manual work will bear many re-readings.

Intellectual work now has its turn.

How few young women, even of those who for many years have followed sedulously, and often to the detriment of their health, the educational programme laid out for them, possess any real love for study, and any serious wish to increase their stock of knowledge; while fewer still can be said to have reached that which is the starting point of all intellectual development—the art of knowing how to learn. And if we consider the practical results of our curriculum, we shall find them even less satisfactory. There are few women among us who can write a business letter

clearly and concisely ; few who can state accurately how the debit and credit account of their income stands ; and few who can be described as in any way capable of managing their own affairs.

The cause, Madame Zamoyska is inclined to think, lies principally in the fact that education "finished" is more often education forgotten than education applied. And one of the main tasks she sets herself in this department is therefore that of securing the prompt and practical utilization of such knowledge, whatever it may be, as is being at the time acquired.

Last but not least we have spiritual work—work of which the world knows nothing, but on which, in so far as its issues are beyond this world, the value of all other work hinges. The end of all spiritual work, as here explained, is to form in us the image of Christ, and for this purpose, the paramount necessity of that branch of it which consists in daily meditation—meditation solid, painstaking, methodical—is strenuously insisted upon :

Nothing will bring our faults and our imperfections so vividly before us as frequent and earnest meditation on the life and teaching of Christ. And painful as this knowledge of self must inevitably be, we must not shrink from it or be discouraged by it. The clear perception of our needs is a special grace from God and a sign of approaching progress.

The clear "vision" of our shortcomings which we attain through meditation will incite us to regret them. This sorrow is salutary ; it should not lead to discouragement, but act on the soul as "the early and the latter

rain " that fertilizes a hitherto arid soil, and makes it bring forth humility and contrition ; these again will in their turn bear fruit by giving us strength and courage to make the good resolutions we need.

Without losing time or opportunity, let us accomplish promptly the acts of virtue that lie within our reach, remembering that the least are often the best for us, because they can be done more easily, and, as they pass unperceived by men, they give less food for vain-glory, and for that very reason retain all their merit before God.

The " Spirituality " of this chapter is, at the same time and to a most singular degree, calming and stimulating, sober and profound.

Nothing could be further from the truth than to suppose that, in Madame Zamoyska's work, theory has been developed at the expense of practice. The whole ordering of the Zakopane establishment is, on the contrary, practical in the highest degree.

In a large but unpretentious looking house, surrounded by its own outbuildings, fields, and gardens, some 130 girls on an average are generally in training. Some of them are young girls of good family, who, after leaving school or college, come for a *post-graduate* course in matters pertaining to household management. Some are members of the " bourgeoisie," the comfort of whose future homes will be likely to depend on their own personal exertions ; while others are the daughters of peasants and artizans, who on leaving the primary schools are received at the Zakopane house for a three years' course of practical training, of a sort to be equally useful to



## NOTE



THE present work is translated by permission from the French edition of the Countess Zamoy-ska's work, published by M. Lethielleux, Paris, under the title "Sur le Travail."\*

Any who would like further information as to the work carried on at Zakopane, which is incidentally described in this volume, are invited to write to the publishers at 22 Paternoster Row, London, who will be glad to forward enquiries or other communications to those responsible for the present edition.

---

\* "Sur le Travail." Traduit du polonais par H. C. Introduction par le R. P. Baudrillart, de l'Oratoire. 12mo, 2me édition, fr. 2.50. Paris : P. Lethielleux.



# CONTENTS



PAGE

## CHAPTER I

On Work in General ... .. 1

## CHAPTER II

Manual Work ... .. 11

## CHAPTER III

Intellectual Work, the Work of the Mind ... .. 41

## CHAPTER IV

On Spiritual Work ... .. 84





## ILLUSTRATIONS



School of Domestic Economy, Zakopane	...	...	<i>Front.</i>
Summer Laundry, Zakopane	...	...	<i>Face p. 33</i>



## ERRATA



*Page 52, line 8.—For successful read successive.*

*Page 54, lines 2 and 3.—Should themselves have some acquaintance with the various branches of human learning.*



# IDEALS IN PRACTICE



## CHAPTER I

### On Work in General

THAT we owe obedience to all God's laws, that to consider His commandments and keep them is our imperative duty, we all readily admit. Yet how little thought is habitually given to His first great ordinance to Man, that he should earn his daily bread in the sweat of his brow !

Although the great Taskmaster has left us in the fulfilment of this as of other duties a large measure of choice and freedom of will, He has, on the other hand, shown how much importance He attaches to this duty in particular, by making mankind as a whole so dependent on the results of work, that without it the race could not exist. And this inexorable law applies as fully to our intellectual and spiritual as to our material life.

"Subdue the earth," was the command of God to our first parents when He gave it to them for their portion. And how could they subdue it without labour, were it only the harvesting of its fruits? To dress and keep the Garden of Eden was doubtless an easy task and a pleasant

one; and if the labour now exacted from man is toilsome and wearisome, that is because since the fall the decree of Divine Justice has changed the conditions attached to work, by making it at once a punishment of sin and a satisfaction for sin. In the person of Adam his descendants were told that the earth would henceforth bring forth thorns and brambles, and that only by severe and strenuous labour could they make it yield them its fruits.

Thus it is that, for fallen man, work has become, not only a necessity and a duty, but also an atonement for sin, and consequently one of the conditions necessary to secure his salvation; still more it is a harvest of merit to those who perform it cheerfully and of their own free will.

Work is, besides, a necessary condition for the preservation of bodily health, and for the rational enjoyment of life; the very act of living is an expenditure of vital force, and every faculty of our being, whether physical or mental, becomes atrophied if unused.

Man's natural aptitudes divide themselves into three classes: they are manual, intellectual and spiritual. So, in order to correspond with these aptitudes, work must likewise be threefold—manual, intellectual and spiritual.

Whichever field of human endeavour we choose as our own, we have before us a divine example, a pattern set us to follow. Christ, in the house at Nazareth, worked as a carpenter with His foster-father Joseph; in the temple

and the synagogue, He read the scriptures, explaining their mysteries and meanings; while throughout His whole life, whether praying, fasting or wrestling with Satan, His spiritual labours never ceased.

At the present time, intellectual work is both practised and appreciated; even the most worldly do not cavil at it as derogatory to human dignity, but rather strive to find in it food for their pride and vanity. The high value set on knowledge and an eager desire for its diffusion have been perhaps the most marked characteristics of the century that has lately closed. But for spiritual labour, for the science of the soul, the world cares little, and until its very nature is changed, it will not be capable of understanding it.

Lastly, the world despises manual labour, though signs are not wanting that it may be the allotted task of the twentieth century to restore to such labour its true and primitive dignity.

It has to be borne in mind that much as these three divisions of work just enumerated differ in character, they are intended to form one harmonious whole; taken singly, each would fall short of its true value. One would think that, to those who observe and reflect on what is passing around them, every day must bring some confirmation of this vital truth. Yet how completely it is ignored, both in the training of the young and in the organization of society, which seems to aim rather at their separation than at their union!

Some are so engrossed by material labours that, day after day, neither morning or evening, can they find time to pray; they know neither the physical laws which should rule their work, nor the moral laws which should guide their lives.

Others there are who give themselves up to intellectual work with such absorption of mind and thought that they too have no time left in which to draw light and inspiration from the fountain of all wisdom. Neither have they leisure for that human intercourse which would enable them to verify by daily experience the accuracy of their ideas and theories.

Then there remains another class—and theirs is perhaps the strangest case of all—who, having the gift of faith, together with a certain knowledge of spiritual matters, have yet such mistaken ideas about religion as to think that they can build up their spiritual lives solely by performing external acts of piety. They neglect the duties of their state of life; they neglect the culture of their minds; like the servant in the parable, they bury the talents entrusted to them, and let their lives glide away without profit to themselves, without benefit to their fellow man, without any yield of glory to God, achieving no result—unless too often that of having brought religion into contempt by their false and perverted piety. It is of such that our Lord spoke: “This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me.”



The serious consideration of this threefold obligation of work is incumbent on all, but it is specially needful for women, who, in order to perform rightly the duties Providence has imposed on them, must keep their physical health and their intellectual faculties duly balanced. It is most necessary of all to those who feel the impulse stirring within them to do something, however limited their powers, towards the spread of Christ's kingdom on earth, to devote their lives and their energies to the service of God and of their country. But we shall never be able to carry out our resolutions, unless we train our hands to useful work, strengthen our intellects by exercise, and sanctify our daily actions by prayer. We have also to bear in mind that while there are three kinds of work, there are likewise three corresponding kinds of idleness: physical, intellectual and spiritual; and that for these work is at once the remedy and allotted punishment; a punishment which experience will show us to be exactly proportioned to the gravity of our fault; for if we have yielded to idleness in any one of these spheres of labour, we shall find it proportionately hard to recover the ground lost.

And for this reason we Polish women must first direct our efforts towards acquiring the habit of manual labour, since disinclination for such work, and the spirit of false pride which almost invariably accompanies this disinclination, have unfortunately been, for many centuries,

characteristics of our race; there are many among us who think it less disgraceful to beg than to work for their living.

Shall we not more easily loosen the fetters of unmeaning formalism that shackle us, and remove more quickly the shadow that mars the fair fame of our country, if we ourselves—though not driven to it by any necessity—take voluntarily on our own shoulders some share of the world's burdens? Even if manual labour is distasteful, let us, nevertheless, practise it, until habit has made it a pleasant task, a source of honourable pride. And we shall surely find, sooner perhaps than we dream, that the torch once lit will quickly be passed on from hand to hand; first, by those gathered around us, our pupils and our friends, when, trained and skilled in much useful knowledge, they return to their homes and families expert and persevering workers, bringing with them the notion of work as honourable in itself, as an expiation for our offences and shortcomings, and, best of all, as the means of upraising our country. Thus only will be overcome that pagan conception, the outcome of a debased Orientalism, that work is degrading, and that idle hands are a badge of aristocracy. Has not idleness, on the contrary, ever been the beginning of decadence, whether in the moral or the material order, and industry the first step of the ascending ladder, for nations not less than for individuals?

And when we have implanted in the minds of those we are able to influence the love of work for its own sake, our next task will be to bring home to them the conviction that even the coarsest and humblest labour, if carried out with order, skill and care, acquires a certain dignity and value; and, further, that those who, whether by necessity or choice, are chiefly occupied in manual work, are in no wise exempt from the obligation of intellectual labour, but that, on the contrary, they need it in order to do their daily work thoroughly and well. It is precisely when a man of cultivated intelligence takes in hand a task involving manual labour, or when one whose daily occupation is a handicraft has had the advantage of superior education, that work attains a higher standard, and becomes attractive, interesting, often very valuable. But the man who has cultivated his intellect, but never trained his physical powers to work or to endurance, remains all his life clumsy and ineffectual, with his faculties only half developed; while he who works with his hands only never attains to the use or control of his mental faculties; both classes suffer equally, though in different ways. The idle rich man, as life goes on, will deteriorate in physical strength, in mental grasp, in moral character; while the labourer, if he neglects the measure of intellectual and spiritual work that is well within the capacity of all, will not only fall short of his natural dignity as a human being, but is likely,

from his ignorance of the principles and conditions that rule labour, to have a very limited capacity for earning his livelihood.

How many of the discoveries and inventions which, taking the last century alone, have done so much to establish man's dominion over the material world, and added so much to the well-being of the human race, do we not owe to the intelligence of workmen and artisans? Are not they in the truest sense benefactors of humanity who, while personally engaged in overcoming the struggle against the difficulties of manual labour (having to support themselves and their families by work of the severest and most strenuous kind), yet by close and patient observation and by intelligent application of what their daily labours taught them, have found the secret of applying natural and mechanical forces so as to lessen the huge burden human strength had formerly to bear alone, and, consequently, have improved the conditions of thousands of lives? Have not these intelligent labourers done far more to raise human life to a higher level than most of the so-called philosophers who have tried to achieve the same result by wasting their time in abstract arguments and in building up impossible Utopias? And has not their faithful fulfilment of the task of manual labour, far from being any degradation, been rather the means of kindling in them a deeper interest in their fellow-workers, and brought them a step nearer to the realization of that feeling of uni-

versal brotherhood which is the Christian ideal? Has it not stimulated them to those intellectual labours which have made their name honourable, and to the spiritual labours in which they found solace amid life's inevitable trials and learnt to possess their souls?

Such careers are not within the reach of all, but the path these trod is that which all must follow who aspire to play their part well in the great drama of the world's progress. If the works of men are various in their results and in their influence, such variation arises from the greater or lesser degree in which they rest on the threefold foundation of the harmonious and united work of hand, mind and heart. Indeed, it is not too much to say that manual labour seems to hold in the divine plan the same relation to intellectual and spiritual work that the human body holds towards the human soul; for each is indispensable to the other, and, unless they are united, neither can reach its highest development.

Mythology has been called a distorted reflection of religion; it is a reflection in which some vestiges of primeval truths may often be discerned. Among the strange, weird statues the Assyrians worshipped as their gods there is one type often repeated, which may serve as an illustration of what we have endeavoured to convey. The head is as of a man, every curve and line telling of intellectual development; from the shoulders spread wings strong enough to reach



the heavens, while feet, firmly pressed on the earth, seem to hold it in their grip. To possess the earth in the sense of compelling its rich tribute, to discern by thought and study the laws by which nature works, and to raise our souls heavenwards on the wings of prayer and contemplation, should be our daily and life-long task.

The history of the Church shows us how thoroughly this has been understood by the founders of the great religious orders. Take the Benedictines. Who can distinguish among the masterpieces they have bequeathed us the boundary-line which divides these threefold kinds of labour one from another? The priceless manuscripts their scribes engrossed, the glorious churches and abbeys on which no architect inscribed his name, are monuments at once of their manual and of their intellectual labour, and deathless witnesses to the fervour and intensity of their spiritual life.

And how shall we find words adequate to praise those Carthusians and Trappists who, combining prayerful silence with arduous work and with the application of skilled scientific methods, have changed so many barren and pestilential marshes into fertile plains, making the desert blossom as the rose? Even though their achievement far exceeds our highest dreams or possibilities, yet their example must ever be helpful to us, proving what results, wisely directed, labour may attain, if it be done "with God and for God."

## CHAPTER II

### Manual Work

IN those countries where the trend of public opinion makes manual labour despised, causing it to be looked upon as an occupation only suitable for those who can in no other way provide themselves with the necessities of life, it is natural that many worldly people dislike any work of the kind ; and even where a healthier spirit prevails, our natural indolence prompts us to turn away from anything that demands serious and prolonged exertions. Besides, the benefits which as has been shown, would accrue to our souls from such work if done in a penitential spirit, are sufficient reason for the ever watchful enemy of our salvation to discourage our efforts by stirring up our inborn pride to revolt against its natural discipline.

Yet the tradition of a truer and nobler pride still lingers in an expression often used by Poles before putting their hands to any rough job : "It will not make the crown fall from my head." They thereby acknowledge that a man may stoop to commonplace work without losing the kingly temper of mind and heart. Why is it, alas, that our whole national life is a contradiction of this familiar and traditional saying? Why

is it that a Polish woman has often to exercise almost heroic virtue to fulfil duties which in other countries are regarded as matters of course ?

There is one reason at least, and that a very simple one, not far to seek. Do we not read in Holy Writ that God made all things according to their kind, and then, looking down on all the things that He had made, saw that they were very good ? And one cause of the perfection which is inherent in every work of the Great Craftsman, is that He makes all "in measure and number and weight," \* that is, according to laws wisely conceived and strictly followed. And it is the same with men and women. They too do not despise the work of their hands, but rather rejoice and take pleasure in it, provided only that by their thought and industry they have brought it to the highest perfection of which it is capable.

The amount of pains taken in the execution of a piece of work gives the exact measure of the value at which the worker himself appraises it ; while in inverse ratio, he who does his work carelessly, testifies to his own incompetence and indolence. This rule applies as fully to groups as to individuals ; wherever we find useful and necessary work commonly spoken of as a matter of little account, we may be sure that the country itself holds a low place in the family of nations.

And if we Poles must perforce admit that ignorance and incompetence are the source and origin of the dislike to work and the contempt

---

\* Wisd. xi, 21



for work which have been and still are the causes of endless misery and ruin to our beloved country, is it not our bounden duty to neglect nothing which might stimulate her in however small a degree? We have not, alas, any innate desire for perfection in our work; most of us are easily satisfied with a medium standard of achievement which more progressive nations would not endure, yet we have a certain feeling and love for the beautiful, which we should strive to foster and turn to account in manual work.

God alone is supremely beautiful; in Him alone can man hope to find perfection. But they who seek Him with their whole hearts, who strive to contemplate His perfections, may perhaps gain a clearer vision and a quicker discernment of the beautiful in other and lower forms, and especially of that which is to be found wherever the Divine Exemplar is followed, and any work executed according to rule, order and measure, so that, however modest, it may yet be good of its kind; and the love of the beautiful, of which many traces linger amongst our people, is usually most fully developed in relation to spiritual things, wherever faith has most firmly retained its hold. They who are prone to say that for ordinary purposes "anything is good enough," yet feel that for the service of God and for His altar nothing can be sufficiently beautiful or costly.

This sentiment is admirable; far from checking, our endeavour should be to strengthen and stimulate it, while at the same time the higher

aspiration, the recognition of the beautiful as emanating from a divine source, should be nourished and extended till it radiates down to every detail of human life and work. We have only to bear in mind that wherever there is order and harmony, there beauty may be found. What abode can be humbler than the cell of the bee? Yet how beautiful is its simple and symmetrical construction! it was built up, not as a work of art, but for food and shelter in strict obedience to nature's laws. Even in work of an humbler class still, where the coarseness of material makes any approach to outward beauty impossible, yet if executed with exactness and precision, it will bear witness to moral qualities of far higher value.

Unfortunately it is precisely these qualities of exactness and precision which are repellant to our Polish temperaments. Of this our daily intercourse with our pupils gives experience. They lack precision both in their character and in their fingers; they see no necessity for it, and do not feel that its absence indicates any deficiency in themselves or in their work. They choose eagerly any occupation in which exactness is not required of them, while they carefully avoid those in which it is indispensable. For instance, they all are ready to spend hours in gathering flowers in the garden or the fields for a festive occasion; yet hardly one is able to plant a bed of those same flowers with anything like symmetry. They show considerable skill in

stitching or arranging a piece of finery, but hardly one can sew a seam evenly, while to hem and make a dozen handkerchiefs with perfect neatness and regularity is a height of achievement hardly ever obtained. They will decorate the house for a festive occasion with both care and good taste, but never give a moment's thought or an hour's time to keeping the furniture dusted and polished ; showing that it is not the amount of labour required, but the mental and bodily discipline which methodical persevering labour implies, that repels them. As we learn from Holy Writ, and, we may add, from the world's experience, that only those things which are done "according to measure and number and weight" have any real value or lasting duration, we must not wonder that a country where these solemn ordinances have been neglected for generations should have deteriorated rather than progressed. We must take to heart the lesson that the best way in which we can all help in raising Poland is by developing in ourselves and in our surroundings those qualities in which we know ourselves to have been deficient, and without which the revival of our beloved country is impossible. We should find strength and comfort in those mystical words we have perhaps remembered too seldom : "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." If we strive to apply them to our daily actions, we surely shall come at last to do all things "according to measure, weight and number." And when our day's

work is done, we too must reserve a time for quiet and undisturbed reflection, that we may learn to possess our souls in patience and in peace. "There still remaineth a Sabbath for the people of God."

If we cannot produce anything without disciplined effort, neither can we without it preserve anything in its integrity. Through lack of it, our country has fallen to her present condition: we see that we cannot assist more efficaciously in upraising her than by endeavouring to create in ourselves, and in those around us, those qualities which she most needs, and without which her resurrection is impossible.

Therefore, if we grant that the want of exactness is one of the main defects of our national character, let us direct all our efforts to the formation within us of the opposite quality. Let exactness and precision be the characteristic of whatever work or duty we perform.

When teaching our pupils we should lay especial stress on the same points. We shall thus develop in ourselves and in others the qualities needed for the regeneration of our country.

What is sometimes called "the passivity of the Slavonic races" has often been a strong weapon of defence against our enemies, but it needs the curb, or rather, let us say, the whip and spur. Passive habits of mind may help us to bear and to resist; they will never lead us on to victory.

If we would get through our daily task "in

measure and number and weight," we should lay it out in advance, according to general but fixed rules, to which we must adhere in every detail, with a conscientious and unswerving endeavour to complete what we have taken in hand as completely and accurately as possible, yet with thoughtful economy of time, money, material, and even of personal exertion. To do this we must bear in mind the old rule of having "a time for everything, and everything at its time," carefully using our judgement so as to avoid both slothfulness and ill-regulated haste. Before undertaking any important task we should therefore calculate the number of hours or of days needed to complete it, making sure that neither necessary sleep nor the Sunday's rest will be interfered with. Then comes the providing and sorting of all the materials required, so that there shall be no time lost later in seeking, cleaning or repairing what ought to have been prepared beforehand; while the rule that nothing should ever be used save for the purpose for which it was intended must be strictly kept.

When several persons have to work together at the same task, there must be a thoughtful distribution of the share each is to undertake, with due consideration for individual strength and capacity, so that each should know exactly what she is to do; any inclination on the part of a worker to do more than she has been told, even if it comes from zeal or good nature, must be promptly checked.



Those engaged in household work should be careful to wear suitable clothes. Their skirts must not trail on the ground, nor have any unnecessary flouncing or trimmings; they should fit easily, so that the wearer can move and lift her arms without hindrance. If a skirt is somewhat too long, it can be dexterously and neatly fastened up. For working in the kitchen a large linen or holland apron should cover the dress; for painting or outdoor work a dark blue one is best, while for lighter employments indoors a white apron in any washing material will suffice.

It is needless to say that for domestic work of any kind the hands should be carefully and frequently washed; but there is another necessary detail sometimes overlooked. Millers, bakers or cooks—indeed all men who are employed in preparing food—keep their heads carefully covered with a white linen cap or cloth; and women when engaged in similar occupations should certainly not be less careful and dainty.

Any task once begun should be carried through without any unnecessary delay. Work that has been interrupted or put aside from day to day invariably suffers in consequence. If delay is inevitable, put what you have done carefully aside, in a clean and suitable place, and to be secure from the tumbling of idle hands, if possible under lock and key. Nor must it be forgotten that there are many things which if put together injure each other. It is

said that some colours suffer by contact: it is certain that some articles of food lose their freshness of flavour in proximity. Every article of domestic use should have its own proper place and should be so put away that it can be easily seen and taken out without disturbing its neighbours.

Without some such careful provision, there will be absence of order and much loss of time in seeking for what is perhaps urgently needed. To be remiss in this point betrays a lack of the cardinal virtue of prudence.

Again, nothing should be put by without being carefully cleaned and examined, so that no mending or repairing shall be necessary when it is taken out. This rule has to be carefully observed with regard to things that are put by for winter or for summer use, and for those needed for a journey; the time following arrival, not the day of departure is the proper time for such work.

Again all work should be done in an orderly manner; this implies not merely that whenever we interrupt our work we must put all our instruments and materials carefully away (though this is a very important matter), but also that during all the time we are actually employed we must so arrange as to make as little litter as possible. They who are careful on this point, even if called away unexpectedly, leave everything in perfectly good order; this gives to their work a certain sense of completeness and har-

mony which makes it attractive to others as well as to themselves. But to do this requires care and forethought: the obvious rules never to throw things on the floor, never to use chairs as if they were tables, nor put work down where it is likely to be swept away, must be strictly kept. Anything we happen to let fall must be picked up at once, anything spilt or upset instantly wiped and cleaned up, so that the floor may not become stained by persons treading the mess about. In any domestic work for which liquids are used, the jugs and bowls should be large enough to hold them without the risk of their brimming over, and a good-sized board should be at hand to place them on, so as to lessen the risk of staining the floor or furniture.

Careless needlewomen sometimes surround themselves with an astonishing amount of litter, especially when cutting out materials; this is obviated by providing oneself, before sitting down to work, with a couple of bowls or baskets, and putting in one all ends of threads, fluff and snippets too small for use; in the other the pieces of material which are presently to be used, or which are worth keeping, while the pieces which are for immediate use should be laid together. When this is done in the order in which they will be wanted, a great deal of time is saved.

When vegetables have to be prepared for table, they should be brought into the house in a basket. As you clean them, lay them one by one in a kitchen crock, and throw the waste stuff



into a basket or bucket. In plucking fowls follow the same routine, having one basket for the fowls which are to be plucked, a crock in which to lay the plucked fowls, and a basket for the feathers. This arrangement holds good for almost every kind of work.

When doing rough or kitchen work, have a wet cloth at hand, so as to be able to wipe off at once any flour or butter or any spot or stain from your hands.

If you have to cut paper, cardboard, or any other materials into pieces of the same size, be careful always to copy the first pattern; otherwise you may unconsciously increase or diminish the size of your pieces.

When you are engaged in laundry work, calendering or ironing, be careful to sort your articles, laying the sheets on the sheets, the handkerchiefs on the handkerchiefs, and so on.

In doing plain needlework it is desirable to keep, as far as possible, to one kind of sewing at a time; for instance, if a dozen shirts have to be made, they will be done more quickly, better stitched and better turned out, if the whole twelve are first cut out together, then seamed, hemmed, and finally button-holed; for the hand gains in dexterity by repeating the same task again and again. However, in bookbinding and some other kinds of work each article must be begun and finished separately.

Some may be inclined to think these minute details trivial and beneath the notice of intelli-

gent persons; let them remember the warning words of Christ, that they only who have proved faithful in little things will be faithful in greater things. The vital point is that we should, while fulfilling our daily duties, bear in mind that if done according to the will of God, in submission to and in union with His governance of the universe,\* they will have an eternal significance. And just as in a complicated piece of mechanism, the smallest wheel is as important as the biggest, if the whole is to be kept in working order, and each single part must do its allotted task with unfailing precision; just as in the animal world the tiniest insects have their proper place and use as distinctly marked out as that of the largest quadrupeds, and from their infinitely greater numbers are the really important factors in the general organization of nature, so in the realm of morality, the daily round of duties, insignificant as each taken singly may appear, plays a more important part than do those heroic deeds for which the opportunity very seldom occurs.

When we spoke of the necessity of manual labour, that did not by any means imply that we should deprive ourselves of the help which may be gained by using machines. On the contrary, they should be utilised in every possible way; whenever manual work from which the artistic element is absent can be lightened by any me-

---

\* "Who sweeps a room, as for Thy sake,  
He makes the action fine."—G. HERBERT.

chanical contrivance, let us by all means employ them ; the result will be a very great economy of both time and money. A good machine, even if expensive to buy, will soon repay the cost price ; it can be kept in order with very little outlay, and will make us independent of the incompetence and possible ill-will of paid workmen. One person with some knowledge of mechanics can keep in order and direct a considerable amount of machinery of various kinds and thus get quickly through a quantity of work which, if done by hand labour, would require a large number of workmen, more or less skilled, who would probably not execute it as accurately or as well.

It used to be thought that machinery deprived the labouring man of his bread, but this old-fashioned prejudice has now died out. Everyone knows, for instance, that if postboys and coaching stables lost employment for a time from the introduction of railways, the latter, by diminishing the cost of travel and opening out fresh districts, give work to a hundredfold more men. The same fears were expressed when sewing machines came into use, and with the same results : a far greater number of women are now enabled to earn a better living as seamstresses, besides the gain to the trade of the country from the making and selling of the machines.

Another objection sometimes made to the use of machines is that those who use them will fail to acquire manual dexterity. There is some-

thing in this ; however, at the present moment the most pressing difficulty is that of getting industrious, intelligent servants and workmen ; so that whether we approve of them or not, the use of machinery in domestic, as in all other work, is steadily increasing and likely to increase still more. Besides, the fact of using any machinery gives some training to the hand as well as to the brain, and it will probably be with other machines as with the sewing machine, which has immensely enlarged the domain of feminine labour for various uses, and not at all diminished the necessity for every good housewife to be skilled in the use of her needle and scissors. Even after making the fullest allowance for all that can be done by machinery, there still remains a vast field for manual labour with which machinery is not likely to interfere to any notable extent. For instance, the whole section of what may be called household work—keeping rooms in order, repairing the wear and tear of daily life, keeping linen and all household articles ready for use, doing all that we need for ourselves instead of depending on the work of others. If this last seems a difficult matter, it is because we have made it such by our artificial ways of life, and by surrounding ourselves with a multitude of superfluous incumbrances, the care of which necessitates an immense amount of fatigue and labour.

They who wish to order their lives as we suggest must first begin by simplifying their sur-

roundings, which may entail making a clean sweep of an accumulation of knick-knacks, the litter of old rubbish, keep-sakes and mementoes which very seldom recall anything worth remembering.

Another consideration, and one which should have special weight with Catholics, ought not to be overlooked. Amongst the institutions which have won for themselves the highest dignity and consideration must be reckoned the great monastic houses of mediæval days. And in their constitutions one of the rules most insisted on is the practice of manual labour as a means of sanctification. In the old foundations, where the spirit of the founder was still fresh, every monk, whatever his rank or his learning, ministered to his own needs and took his share of the common burdens. Finally, raising our eyes higher still, we find in the Holy Family, in the House of Nazareth, the most perfect illustration of the dignity of manual labour.

Let us honour it by making ourselves like to those who have to earn their bread in the sweat of their face; even as the Son of God, taking on Himself our mortal flesh, made Himself like unto us; recognizing that when we work with others we take on ourselves a share of their toil, and are obeying the divine command: "Ye shall bear each other's burdens." Thus shall we come to understand the world's greatest and holiest lesson, that all mankind are indeed but one family, that we are the children of one



heavenly Father, members of one body, of which Christ is the head.

When, in order to provide ourselves with occupation, we are engaged in choosing some special branches of work, we should be careful to select those which will be materially as well as morally profitable to us or to others. Some women fancy themselves usefully employed when in reality they are only wasting their energies in order to minister to their greediness or to their love of finery. Work of this kind, instead of being serviceable or economical, is in reality bad stewardship and waste both of time and of material. For instance time and money are frequently wasted in the making of a multitude of useless articles known as fancy work, which practically only crowd our rooms with superfluous objects, and having no real artistic merit, do not give pleasure to cultured eyes.

Again, there are women who, under the pretence of being notable housekeepers, make with their own hands (or perhaps only preside over the making of) jams, cakes, pastry and other dainties, in quantities far beyond the actual requirements of their households. The labour of making these things is sometimes very great, but is it profitable? Are we not tempting ourselves and others to indulge the palate to the detriment of health by destroying the appetite for wholesome, natural food? The really good housekeeper is she who stimulates the appetites

of her family and of her guests by providing them with simple viands that have been carefully selected, prepared and cooked ; and by her intelligence and her skilful use of the materials within her reach supplies wholesome variety. How much food do we not see daily wasted from ignorance of the simplest rules of cooking ? How many things thrown away which would make excellent food, if our people only knew how to prepare them and were willing to do it ? For many kinds of fish, fruits and vegetables are cast aside amongst us, which in other and richer countries are utilized and enjoyed. Indeed, it is one of the characteristics of partially civilized races that they keep to a few articles of food, and refuse even to taste what is unaccustomed. But this, like other prejudices, can be overcome by example, and our women could hardly find a wider field of usefulness than in this specially feminine branch of work. If, as is often said, "the man who makes two ears of corn grow where only one grew before is a benefactor to humanity," the same is surely true of the woman who, by taking care and thought, adds both material and variety to the foodstuffs of a nation.

But there is no pursuit from which women who live in the country can derive so much moral and material benefit as from gardening. The simple possession of a garden where we can peacefully spend our hours of leisure in laying out and supervising the management of our own

domain, gives healthful employment and much real enjoyment; the cultivation of a garden is indeed the first precept of revelation and the last word of philosophy. But in order to get from our gardens all they have to yield us, we must put our own hands to the spade and hoe. Lest this prospect should deter some, we will begin by considering the moral benefits to be derived from it. Is it not our experience that so many things happen daily to annoy, vex, trouble even those amongst us whose lines have fallen in the pleasantest places, that in order to keep our minds under control, our faculties well balanced, to possess our souls in the patience that becomes Christians, we need some outlet, some safety valve, some external interest always within our reach? Many seek for this in social excitements, in amusements, in card-playing, even in wine and in morphia, while others soothe their irritated nerves by violent exercise, spending hours together in riding, walking, or athletic games. This last is certainly the better remedy, yet does it not often lead to waste of time, which might be far better employed? Instead of using up our strength in almost mechanical movements let us find the safety valve we need in the more useful and still healthier labours of the digging, sowing, planting and weeding and in harvesting earth's beautiful and bounteous gifts.

A well-kept garden is a source of just pride to the owner. Practised intelligently, gardening ranks among the best of mental and moral edu-



cators, combining as it does something both of agriculture and of manufacture, while it has an artistic side which gives it a special stamp of distinction. Then it inspires those who practise it with a healthy emulation in contests in which all may win prizes, and popularises the ideas of beauty and order among those who before had but little notion of them. Indeed all outdoor agricultural works should be to us as stepping-stones to higher things. They whose daily work brings them in touch with the kindly influences of nature, while they keenly realise that the final fruits of their labour are in the hands of Him from whose power the rays of the sun derive their heat, and who keeps the store-houses of the frost, and that without His blessing their labour will come to nothing, will yet use all their skill and energy to control the secondary agencies through which the divine will chooses to work in order to convey to us His gifts; they will by no means take refuge in an indolent and culpable fatalism. In no branch of human endeavour do we read more plainly that we are servants and not masters, stewards rather than owners of our earthly possessions, and must watch patiently the appointed seasons for seed-time and for harvest. Yet in the long run we reap what we have ourselves sown; the thorns which pierce us are of our own planting; the earth brings forth the harvest only on the ground we have ourselves enriched and cultivated.

There yet remains another still more salutary

lesson, reminding us of a truth we are all apt to forget—that the enemies with whom we have to struggle during our mortal pilgrimage are very numerous and very powerful, and that only by unintermittent care and watchfulness we shall be able to defend ourselves against them. Is it not the gardener's unfailing experience that a single act of carelessness may ruin the patient labour of weeks and months, that from a few days' neglect of weeding at a critical moment the struggling crop is choked beyond recovery, that from a heap of rubbish left to decay will speedily issue forth an insect host hardly visible to the eye, yet with boundless unlimited power to destroy, blighting in a few hours the fair promise of May?

And besides the moral lessons gardening conveys to us, it also has its intellectual side, providing us with plenty of hard mental work in calculating the crucial question of profit and loss. For if the outgoings are found to exceed the incomings, gardening must at once be ranked as a luxury which may degenerate into culpable extravagance. Therefore it is a matter of duty before we embark in it, to examine and calculate most carefully what crops it is worth our while to cultivate in a given locality and under what conditions—whether most profit can be made out of flowers, shrubs, vegetables, or fruits; whether the latter can be best used in their natural state or preserved in sugar, or whether it will be best to confine ourselves to producing what we ourselves shall consume in our domestic circle,

giving a fair margin for recreation and enjoyment.

We often hear it said by well educated women that not only they cannot earn, but that they even find it difficult to employ their time usefully; while on the other hand persons carrying on business constantly complain of the impossibility of procuring intelligent and willing women workers. The reason of this twofold difficulty is that manual labour, as we have before said, is not held amongst us in the honour and respect it deserves, and is only sought for as a means of livelihood by persons who from inferior mental capacity, or from deficient education, cannot earn their living in any other way. This it is which bars the development of home industries among us Poles, which restricts our exports to raw materials that fetch very low prices, while the little money we have to spend goes to foreigners from whom we often buy back our own produce in a manufactured state and at exorbitant rates; thus is our poverty increased and perpetuated. But if the educated among us would apply their talents to initiating and developing useful industries, they might reap considerable profit for themselves and be real benefactors to their country. Of what may be achieved by the intelligent application of energy and talent to industrial purposes we have a very striking example in England. It is not to the numerical strength of her armies, nor to the intelligence of

her government officials that she owes her world-wide dominions and the foremost rank she holds among the great powers, so much as to the skill, energy and initiative of her artizans and working men. With us, on the contrary, an immense number of kinds of work are entirely neglected that might easily be developed at comparatively little expense, which, if carried on with proper understanding and with perseverance, would be found most remunerative.

But it must be borne in mind that just as great enterprises, in order to prove successful, have to be directed by a skilled and highly paid staff of officials, so little ventures are only profitable when they are worked by the owners themselves, who must spare neither mental nor manual labour. Care must also be taken that the articles produced be such as are in common and general use, not subject to the fluctuations of fashion; and forethought must be exercised as to the means of disposing of them in safe and sure markets. Experience shows that our women, when they do attempt any commercial enterprise, too often embark on it hastily and without going through the apprenticeship necessary to obtain a thorough knowledge of the work, or taking trouble to find out where the materials needed can be advantageously purchased and business connections started. As a necessary consequence of these deficiencies the greater number fail in establishing a safe or profitable business, and too often end in losing the little





SUMMER LAUNDRY, ZAKOPANE



capital which, had it been used with proper skill and forethought, might easily have secured them a comfortable income. So let it be borne in mind that no woman should undertake any commercial or industrial business unless she has thoroughly mastered all necessary details and weighed all probable consequences. Time thus employed is never wasted. She who, following the counsel of Scripture, before building her tower, has considered all the circumstances of time, place and environment, and carefully proportioned her work to her physical and mental capabilities, may reasonably feel assured of achieving success—in any case she will have deserved it.

What has hitherto been said relates chiefly to hand and household work and the disposal of what is thus produced. But in a country like Poland, where the holders are small and numerous, and agriculture the mainstay of the population, it has many branches and possibilities of development, which if utilized amongst us as they are in other countries, would become to us also sources of national wealth. To enumerate them all is impossible, but a few may be singled out as examples.

Some of the profits to be made by gardening have already been alluded to ; to these may be added the cultivation of plants used in medicine, and the raising of seeds and of fruit-trees for sale. Other and more important industries are :

1. Basket-making, which brings with it the cultivation of osiers for this purpose.

2. The culture of flax and hemp, which is followed by the preparation of the raw material, weaving and rope-making.

3. Bee-keeping, and the various industries derived from it, such as the preparation of wax for different purposes, the brewing of hydromel \* and the making of honeybread.

4. The cultivation of silkworms.

5. Fish-culture.

6. Poultry rearing on a large scale, either for the table or for the production of eggs, of which millions are yearly exported to England from the northern provinces of France.

7. The pork industry, which includes the manufacture of sausages and many other articles of food.

8. Dairying, which includes several branches of industry, but requires careful training. Danish butter and French and Swiss cheeses are important articles in commerce, and contribute much to the wealth of the countries that produce them.

9. Baking, which with us does not go beyond providing for the wants of each household separately, might be profitably extended, especially in country villages, so as to become a flourishing business. By the use of mechanical help, much of the drudgery now imposed on our housewives would be lightened, and a more thoroughly cooked, and therefore more

---

\* A favourite drink in Poland.—TRANSLATOR.



wholesome food provided for our people,\* while cake and biscuit-making might be carried on at the same time.

There are some kinds of manual industry which can be started more easily and with a quicker return of profit in town than in the country, but it has to be remembered that the preliminary outlay and the working expenses would probably be greater, so that a village is the safer starting-point in most cases.

Bookbinding, whether simple or artistic, is a craft comparatively easy to learn, and specially adapted to feminine fingers. Numbers of women might earn their living by practising it in our cities, while the smaller towns and villages would give employment to some; the same may be said of the manufacture of gimp, either for dress or for furniture trimmings, with other decorative items used in both trades.

Glove-making is a business which might be developed into an important branch of commerce, especially as it includes the rearing of animals for the supply of skins, and the preparation of the latter: from these combined sources much of the wealth of Belgium is derived.

Women willing to go through the necessary technical training might find employment in working for clockmakers, printers or chemists.

Finally, women who, being possessors of a

---

\* It is probable that in Poland, where fuel is often scarce, home-made bread is expensive and unwholesome; but with us it is certainly more economical and more nourishing than bread from a bakery.—TRANSLATOR.

little capital, could start shops in remote or isolated districts, might become real benefactors to the inhabitants by bringing many useful articles of commerce within their reach, while by their strictly honest and conscientious dealings and their abstention from usurious methods they would raise the moral standard of those among whom they live, while realizing for themselves fair and well-earned profits.

As regards ourselves, we who have undertaken the teaching of household management on a somewhat extended scale, must consecrate to this special branch of work all our physical strength and all our mental energy.

The results of many years' experience have been summed up in manuals which set forth clearly and with considerable detail the way in which each separate section of our work should be carried on. Always bearing in mind that what is worth doing at all is worth doing thoroughly and well, we have to be careful in the first place to keep scrupulously to the rules and instructions laid down for us in our manuals. Unquestionably, as time goes on, some changes will have to be made in our systems of work, in order to keep them always fully up to the high-water mark of modern progress; but meanwhile it is a matter of the first importance to insist on uniformity in our methods of teaching. Until the manuals have themselves been altered, the directions they give must be strictly adhered to.

Further, it is much to be desired that each one amongst us should, as far as it is possible, make herself acquainted, both theoretically and practically, with every branch of the work that is carried on here, in order that she may always be able to exercise an intelligent supervision over her pupils, whatever their employment at the time may be. But this must not be taken to mean that we are continually to work with or alongside of them; differences of age, health and strength would often make this unadvisable. Besides, a teacher who gave all her attention to any single detail of the work she has to supervise would be liable to lose her grasp of the whole, and, therefore, to fail in the general direction. Her wisest plan will be, as she passes from one pupil to the next, occasionally to take up the work herself for a brief space, so as to lessen the monotony of their labour and stimulate them by her companionship and example. Indeed, provided it be exercised within wise limitations and with sound judgement, personal participation in the work we carry on is a matter of vital importance. It is only by sharing our pupils' labours, enduring with them all the alternations of heat and of cold, the fatigue and constraint of sitting or of standing, the various pains which weariness produces in brain and limb, that we can become competent to decide what amount of work we have the right to exact from them and to what degree of consideration they are entitled at our hands.

Let us acquit ourselves like women in the strenuous task we have undertaken, bearing in mind that, if the doing of it requires intelligence and capacity, persevering in it makes still stronger demands on the moral side of our nature ; we need zeal in God's service, an eager desire for the upraising of our country, for our neighbour's good and for our own sanctification, that we may not become weary of our work or, still worse, deserters from our posts. For it is pretty certain that the work which at first seemed so easy, so attractive that we perhaps hardly looked on it as work at all, will some day have another aspect, just as a landscape that is radiantly beautiful, when flooded with summer sunshine, grows dreary and repulsive under the grim clutch of winter. Teaching would indeed be a pleasant task if all our pupils, or even the most part of them, were always intelligent, conscientious, alert ; even if we knew them to be at least really anxious to correct their faults and seriously striving to do their best. But when we have day by day to go through the same unvarying routine, constrained to bear patiently with the dull and the froward, with the thoughtless and the obstinate, to keep up what seems often a hopeless contest against ill-will, dissimulation, or deeply-rooted discontent, then the temptation may come to give up what we have undertaken and leave others to carry on the work. And that which will enable us to resist will not be the strength of our physical endurance, nor the

superiority of our mental faculties (though these count for a good deal), so much as the depth and reality of our spiritual life and work. In this, as in all the other trials and difficulties which beset our path through life, we shall find in the remembrance of all that Christ has done and suffered for us our most efficacious support and help. When St Paul wished to make the Hebrews realize the measure of labour and of suffering which awaited them, he wrote: "You have not yet resisted unto blood";\* and, in like manner, the spiritual labour which is to inspire and quicken our manual labour must be such as will imprint on our minds the memory of Christ's sufferings, and of His words—that, as it has been with the Master, so will it be with the servants—words which we Poles should, of all people, be the last to forget.

When, more than three centuries ago, a Polish embassy came to Rome asking the reigning Pope † to give them relics for their churches, the Holy Father did not refuse their request, but replied: "Every handful of your soil might serve as a reliquary, for it is soaked with the blood of martyrs." And should not we, when we recall all that our fellow-countrymen have suffered for their faith and their nationality, feel drawn to give our time and our strength at least for the same causes?

Let us then join our fatigues and our labours to those of Christ as He falls beneath the weight

---

\* Heb. xii, 4.    † Gregory XIII, 1572-1585.



of the cross ; to the labours of our brethren even now working in the Siberian mines. If the hardships we have to endure sometimes make our limbs ache, our hands and feet swell from fatigue and cold, let us recall the pierced hands of our Redeemer, nailed to the cross for our sakes ; if the ingratitude or dissimulation of one of our pupils tries us severely, let us remember all that our Master had to endure, even from the apostles and disciples He had chosen. If, depressed by our task and our surroundings, we are tempted to discouragement, let us remember Him who was sorrowful even unto death, and who though He asked His heavenly Father that the chalice might pass from Him, yet drank it to the dregs. And again, when the knowledge of the sufferings of those near and dear to us who are perishing annually in prison, who are forced against their will to serve a foreign master and wear a foreign uniform, presses heavily on us, let us ask that from us and from them this cup of bitterness may pass, and that the angel of Gethsemane may bring to them and to us confidence, courage, patience and perseverance. Thus will the spirit triumph over temptation and the weak gain the victory.

### III

## Intellectual Work, the Work of the Mind

ALTHOUGH it is true that in these days much attention is given to the education of women, most girls having not only to study, but also to pass examinations which cover a great number and variety of subjects, yet if we appraise the value of our educational systems by their results, these are certainly not what we had been led to expect. How few young women, even of those who have sedulously followed for many years, often to the detriment of their health, the educational programme laid out for them, have any real love for study, or serious wish to increase their stock of knowledge! Fewer still can be said to have reached that which is the starting point of all intellectual development—the art of knowing how to learn.

And if we consider the practical results of our curriculum, we shall find them even less satisfactory, for it is a matter of common observation that there are very few women among us who can write a business letter clearly and concisely, or tell accurately how the debit and credit account of their income stands; or who can be described as in any way capable of managing

their own affairs. If they have to give directions to a carpenter or a builder, they are usually unable to make any plan or drawing showing how they wish the work carried out; the simple principles which regulate the business of life seem to be beyond their mental grasp; while as to legal matters, how many instances do we not all know of women who will sign any paper put before them, compelled by their own ignorance to utter recklessness as to the possible consequences of such folly!

The reason is not far to seek. Their mental training may have sufficed to enable them to acquire, in the disciplined years of girlhood, a certain amount of superficial knowledge of many subjects, and a few showy, generally useless accomplishments; but it has left them too indolent and too frivolous for any serious and continued effort towards self-improvement.

Many causes have contributed to the indolence and incapacity of our women, and it may fairly be admitted that in some degree they excuse it; aptitudes that have been for generations unused must inevitably become atrophied: incapacity begets sloth, and sloth nourishes incapacity. But is not this the stronger reason for making a vigorous effort to get out of a vicious circle and to win for our women 'the place they ought to take among the world's workers?

If this were done, many bitter tears would be dried up at their source, for an incapable woman,



without resources in herself, seldom becomes her husband's companion or helpmate. Even if she has mother-wit enough to make her advice worth listening to, he seldom asks it, while her influence and authority with her children or among her equals will probably be very slight. After all that has been done to establish the rights of women, this is a humiliating position, yet by no means an uncommon one; the privilege of independent action and the respect of others are guerdons to be gained, not through legislation, but by merit.

Meanwhile, the progress of civilization has brought about some improvement, and in these days even the idlest women do not often sit all day long with their hands folded. If they are rich, just as they crowd their rooms with useless trifles, so they fill up their time also, often to excess, with a multitude of imaginary duties, such as unnecessary visits, superfluous letter-writing, endless shopping, varied by the production of piles of flimsy fancy-work or of vain attempts at artistic production, executed without manual skill or mental effort. By thus frittering away their time and letting their mind lie fallow, such women often bring about such a weakening of their natural faculties that any serious thought or occupation becomes an impossibility.

And in the humbler ranks of life we still find women's lives at once too crowded and too empty. The care of their households and of

their children gives them so much to do that unless they put method and intelligence into their work they have no spare moments for the nourishment of their minds and thoughts as life goes on; they forget all they ever learnt in childhood; they become year by year less intelligent, one might almost say less human.

And yet, both in the upper and in the lower ranks of life, from the very accident of their sex, women really require more intelligence and more education than men to perform their duties adequately. A man generally has his profession chosen for him early in life, and his education planned out so that he may be fully instructed in that special line. But women, especially married women of independent fortune, even if they wisely determine to limit their occupations, yet have many and various duties incumbent on them. If they do not need to be specialists in any one line, they still need to have thorough and practical knowledge of a great number of subjects which enter into their daily lives; and the more onerous and multiplied these constantly recurring duties are, the more necessary it is for women to be on their guard lest the intellectual side of their natures be overwhelmed by material cares. The necessary balance can only be arrived at by carefully cultivating and strengthening the mental faculties, a task which the natural impressionability of women, their sensitive natures, their vivid imaginations, make far more

difficult in their case than in that of men. They can only accomplish it by carefully and thoughtfully mapping out their time and the sequence of their occupations, so that each branch of work shall have its allotted space, and consequently intellectual work shall not be crowded out of their lives. When this has become a fixed, unvarying rule, they will quickly find it a powerful support and help; their memories will be strengthened, their powers of observation developed, and the habit of acting, not from impulse but from well-reasoned principles, will be so firmly implanted as to become a second nature.

It is to the human race alone that the privilege has been given of being able to grow in grace, knowledge and virtue to the last moment of sentient life. They who do not profit by this inestimable privilege will be exposed, when the great day of account comes, to be branded as defaulters. Nor will it avail them then to plead ignorance or blindness, if they have not done what lay within their reach to gain the knowledge and the light they needed.

One would expect that every woman, on becoming conscious of her intellectual deficiency, would wish to remove it, and forthwith begin to cultivate those qualities in which she is lacking. But in reality comparatively few women get beyond the discovery that the difficulty of doing this is immensely increased by the circumstance

that whatever amount of knowledge they may possess as a starting point is unsound throughout, and in total contradiction to the elementary principles on which all intellectual development ought to rest.

Many women see plainly that the reason why they are ignorant of so many things which they ought to know, and would wish to know, is either that their health was weak in childhood, or that they married too young, or that they had inefficient teachers, and being thus provided with some excuse for their inferiority, they put the matter out of their thoughts. But what they ought to do is at once to begin their education afresh from the starting point. The magnitude of the task ought not to hinder them, because there are many things which a child can only grasp by slow degrees, but which can at a later age be mastered with ease and rapidity. Nor is it, as women sometimes fancy, necessary for them to go through any special educational course, or even to have teachers at all. Of course the advantage of having good teachers is very great, but women who live in remote country places, or who are too poor to pay teachers, or those even who cannot set apart regular times or hours for study, are not thereby justified in thinking themselves released from the duty of cultivating their intellectual powers. Any one who can read, write, and has some acquaintance with the first rules of arithmetic, can, even with this limited equipment, educate herself to a degree that often

is astonishing. The only indispensable conditions are patience, perseverance and a resolute will.

The number of useful, even excellent, manuals on every branch of elementary knowledge is so great that the first difficulty that presents itself is which to select? The less we know, the more necessary is it to start with a clear understanding of how to lay out a course of study, and with which subject we should start. Therefore, it is wise to seek advice from some educated and kindly person; there are few places so lonely or so behind the world that such persons cannot easily be found there.

In any case, the best plan for self-education is to lay a solid foundation of practical knowledge in all that is necessary for every-day life. A thorough familiarity with the first rules of arithmetic, a clear understanding of the elements of natural history and of geography, and a firm grasp of the principles of Christian doctrine—which those who have learnt their catechism and sacred history would already possess—makes an excellent preparation for higher studies; languages, mathematics, the elements of science, history, and even philosophy, follow easily and naturally.

But, as has been said, the foundation must be solid and firm. “To put the cart before the horse” is in education the most fatal of mistakes. So the first point is to ascertain if one’s knowledge of elementary matters is familiar and



thorough; if there is the least doubt on this point our intellectual work must begin with them. Those whose handwriting leaves much to be desired should supply themselves with the copy-books used in national schools, and go through them conscientiously; while those who know that their spelling cannot always be relied on should write out the words that have been stumbling-blocks until that obstacle is entirely overcome. To copy out daily short passages of poetry and of prose trains at once the eye and the memory, while the rules of orthography should be learned by heart. For this it is best to choose a short elementary grammar, which gives them concisely and clearly, bearing in mind that none should attempt the study of any foreign language without a thorough knowledge of their own. For though each language has its own special characteristics, yet all have in common certain broad and well-defined grammatical principles.

As to foreign languages, tuition is certainly needful for those who wish to speak them correctly and with the right accent; but when the aim is only to read and understand, it can be attained by the solitary student, who, by using at first literal translations, and working later with dictionary and grammar, with patient and concentrated attention may find herself, after not very prolonged labour, the mistress of many tongues. Besides many practical and obvious advantages accruing from the knowledge of a

foreign language, hardly any branch of study does more to strengthen and widen the intellect. Still, all have not the necessary faculty; for those who lack it, it is best not to lose valuable time in a pursuit which, though useful, is not a matter of necessity, while on the other hand, those who have this natural aptitude will be surprised to find how quickly practice develops it; the more languages we already know, the easier shall we find it to acquire others.

As to the choice of languages to learn, let us remember that the Church is our mother, that Latin is in a special manner the Church's language, and therefore it behoves us to know it. Even if we do not reach the point of reading and studying the classics, the simple knowledge of Church Latin is in itself a valuable possession for a Catholic.

The Greek language, besides being the key of the most perfect of all literatures, has the special advantage that it helps us to understand scientific terms, since these are generally derived from the Greek. This quality of clear, precise definition has an immense influence on intellectual development. However, discretion must be used in recommending the study of Greek to women, unless they have a great deal of spare time and strong intellectual tastes; when these conditions are secured, they may rest assured they will find in it enjoyment of the very highest order. Among living languages, it is probably best to choose either



those of which the literature is likely to exercise a healthy, stimulating influence on our intellectual and spiritual development, or those which will be useful if we travel or make any lengthened stay in a foreign country; in either case, without some knowledge of the language we shall lose many valuable opportunities. Travel is always educative; but they gain most from it who have a sufficient knowledge of languages to be able to converse freely with the natives, and thus learn something of the character and ideas of those among whom they live and move.

Still, the faculty of speaking foreign languages may be considered a luxury not indispensable even to the well-educated, while a thorough knowledge of the principles of arithmetic is of absolute necessity. It has been said that numbers are as indispensable as words to the human race, and are sometimes more powerful in their eloquence. Even the lowest type of savages have some way or system of reckoning. Necessity has been their teacher. Amongst civilized races far easier methods prevail, yet, to our shame be it said, there are those among us who have never mastered them, and such often have to pay heavily for their default. Surely, those who have any pretence of being educated should be as ashamed of ignorance on this point as they would be of speaking in a vulgar rustic dialect; in either case the mind is shackled by the inability to express ideas or facts.

Arithmetic serves many important purposes: it teaches us order and economy, helps us to look after our property, to regulate our household expenditure, and so has a wholesome influence on the peace, order and harmony of family life. It is not too much to say that if the familiar truths that two and two make no more than four, and that if we take two from four only two remain, had always been kept clearly in mind by Polish householders, many a roof-tree now ruined and broken would be flourishing and upstanding still.

And beside its effects on the practical side of life, the study of arithmetic has a powerful influence on the training of the mind. It fosters sequence of thought, accuracy in reasoning, presence of mind, quickness in understanding; it is in fact an intellectual exercise of the first necessity, without which a woman's mind can hardly reach its proper level. Again, from the accuracy of statement which it compels, arithmetic has been said "to teach truth, to exact truth, and to necessitate truth," and may therefore count as a moral power. To search out and take note of all the passages in Holy Writ which have to do with numbers would not be unprofitable, for it would bring home to us how important is the place they fill in the Divine ordinances.

Some women think that, as the knowledge of simple addition enables them to sum up the items of their expenditure, they need not trouble themselves to study any of the other rules. It would

be just as true to say that a child who can spell out its letters may in a certain sense be said to read. Yet who would be satisfied to stop at this point? No woman certainly who is really anxious for self-improvement. What she has to do is to take some simple arithmetical primer and study it slowly and carefully, chapter by chapter, committing each successful definition to memory, and trying to understand thoroughly the meaning of each. She must then work out in figures the exercises set down from first to last, after which she would do well to set herself fresh exercises, till she is satisfied that she not only understands the rules thoroughly, but would be competent to explain them to others accurately and clearly. Her next step must be to acquire the habit of keeping her accounts, both household and personal, with such exactness as to be able to see at a glance the amount of her receipts and expenditure, whether weekly, monthly or yearly. This will enable her to know what reliance can be placed on the various sources of her income; what deductions she will have to make from the nominal amount; whether, and in what way, it can be increased. Lastly, she must judge whether any retrenchment in her expenditure would be a wise economy, dictated by prudence or unnecessary avarice. Here again, be it observed, the question of morality crops up.

Another branch of knowledge, useful for all, is that of elementary or freehand drawing. This

is quite a different matter from really artistic work, such as painting or sculpture—to which it would be useless for those who have no special aptitude to devote their time. But the elements of drawing, so far as they can be applied to the common purposes of life, should be learnt even by those who have only average talent in this direction. To be unable to give any linear representation of objects one has in one's mind is a mental limitation, a defect in the power of expressing one's ideas; indeed there are many things which a dozen pencil strokes will express more clearly than a long harangue. Besides, everything that contributes even in a trifling degree to the training of eye and hand has its importance in education.

We must now pass on to consider what may be termed the minor branches of natural science, such as cosmography, physics, botany, etc.; for some knowledge of the elementary laws of nature would make women more resourceful, and enable them to turn many things that lie under their hands to practical account, instead of letting them run to waste. And contact with nature at any point brings with it the fortifying and the renewal of all our powers; there is truth in the old tradition that the earth is our mother; from her we draw strength and sustenance for mind and body, while the spiritual life, in many of its manifestations, is governed by natural laws. Further, the study of natural science strengthens the faith of "men of good will"; those espe-

cially who have to teach and confirm others in the truths of religion need themselves to be thoroughly instructed in every department of human research, so as to be secured against the danger of being led astray by sophistical reasoning, or by inaccurate statements they would else be unable to refute. It is true that faith rests on revelation rather than on knowledge, but it behoves us to strengthen our own faith by convincing ourselves that it is not opposed to, but is rather confirmed by, reason and science ; while science, when it lacks the support of faith, often leads men's minds astray, biassing their judgement and their intelligence, so that their faith suffers shipwreck. On the other hand, it is when knowledge is strengthened by faith that her greatest victories are achieved.

And for this reason a thorough mastery of the catechetical teaching of the Church is the best preparation for the intellectual life, inasmuch as it contains the elements of the highest knowledge. Indeed, it may be said that she who knows her catechism by heart, with clear appreciation of its meaning, has a valuable store of knowledge, even if she has learnt little else ; while they whose brains have been crammed with miscellaneous facts, but are ignorant of the truths of religion, will gain little either for themselves or for others ; for what they have learnt will have but slight practical or moral influence on their lives.

The study of the catechism leads us on to



that of biblical history, and thence to the general history of the human race. Of all the branches of knowledge, history brings us into the closest contact with our fellow men, and teaches us the most valuable lessons as to the conduct of life. Here is stored up experience dearly bought by the tears and blood of countless generations; here we may discern the causes which have led to the rise and to the fall of nations, and the hidden sources from which they may draw a renewal of life: a knowledge invaluable to us, as it will enable us to realize the importance of our own actions and the deplorable results which may arise from apparently trifling causes. And valuable as this knowledge is even for the most prosperous nations, it is of greater value still to those which are oppressed, and their citizens should strive to mould their lives according to its teachings. But the most important point of all is, never to allow any point of interest, whether national or personal, to distort or weaken our grasp of history as one harmonious whole.

Therefore we must study first universal history in an abridged form, reserving for a later period the study of the history of any special nation or period. And while we are studying, an atlas should lie open before us and be frequently consulted; likewise, a chronological chart should be close at hand, to tell us at a glance, when we are reading about any one country, what was occurring at the same time

throughout the world, what were the comparative degrees of civilization, the customs and the morals of other portions of the globe. Finally, no word of which the meaning is not quite clear should be allowed to be passed over without consulting a good dictionary or encyclopædia. This rule is of the utmost importance, as it is of great help in acquiring accuracy of thought and clearness of expression.

A moderate number of dates should be committed to memory, not in such number as to burden it, but in order to furnish landmarks round which we may group our facts at intervals of not more than half a century. Most educational primers have lists of questions and answers appended to each chapter, and it is an excellent rule to write down categorical answers from memory.

When a skeleton of universal history has been mastered, the next subject should be an abridged history of our own country. This, even with the geographical and chronological notes, which are indispensable, need not take up much time; then should follow a summary of the points at which the history of Poland is connected with the general history of Europe. After this we can, if we like, take up our national history as a special subject. It is a good plan to select some one period or century, or the annals of a particular province, or else to lengthen out our studies by reading all the memoirs, chronicles,



travels or other materials for the making of our national history that are within our reach.

But, if the study of the history of our country is to be a profitable task, and to have a distinct influence on our personal lives and aspirations, it is not sufficient to take it up as a matter of praiseworthy curiosity and interest, nor to be able to repeat glibly the principal dates and the most striking incidents which illustrate it; it must be grasped as a whole, considered in all its aspects. This is by no means easy, for it is a matter of common observation that if any half-dozen people are asked to write down a description of an incident or occurrence of which they were eye-witnesses, there will be a considerable divergence in the narratives. And with writers of history the same rule holds good on a much larger scale; each historian has his own standpoint, and, whether intentionally or not, his pictures of men and of events will be influenced by his personality. So that if we wish to arrive within measurable distance of historic truth, we must read the works of authors holding opposite views, who very likely contradict each other at every page. We must also bear in mind that to understand the history of our own or of any other country we have to ascertain the place it holds in the general history of the human race, and the points of likeness and of divergence between it and the neighbouring countries.

Also, when we study the history of any special period, we must not omit to acquaint

ourselves thoroughly with the state of religion and of literature, of industrial life and of art at the time. The more thoroughly all these points are studied, the better we shall be able to group otherwise isolated incidents, and to pass judgment on them; while to avoid mental confusion, it is well to read lighter historical works, such as memoirs, biographies, monographs, etc., in chronological sequence. This method has the further advantage of assisting the memory to catalogue them accurately and retain the minor details.

Scientific knowledge, in the strict sense of the word, presupposes deep and prolonged studies which themselves require considerable mental gifts and aptitudes. But even in the elementary studies of which we have spoken, and which are within the grasp of any intelligent person, will be found the key to vast storehouses of human attainment. If carried through conscientiously, they will have given the habit of concentrated attention, strengthened the memory, awakened a healthy thirst for increasing our store of knowledge and, above all, an appreciation of serious and profitable reading, a possession of which it is impossible to overrate the value. For, if elementary knowledge of certain necessary subjects is the basis of education, reading is the consolidation and the crown of the edifice, and there are few better tests of character than the choice of books and the amount of attention with which they are read; on these two

points it depends whether our reading is likely to prove an influence for good or for evil. For to reading may be applied the words which St James used with regard to the kindred faculty of speech: it is "a fountain which sends forth both sweet water and bitter." Especially in the case of women whose contact with the outer world is more limited than that of men, and who consequently depend far more on books for the ideas and the theories which mould their lives, a wise selection in reading is of immense importance. They will find in books well chosen "counsellors in adversity, helpers in sickness, companions in solitude," nourishment which will strengthen their minds just as material food strengthens the body, and which, like bodily food, must be chosen with regard to the temperament and the circumstances of each individual. As to the principles which should guide us in our reading, the most obvious is that we should begin with such books as will help us in the conduct of our lives, and give us the knowledge we need to perform faithfully and fully our duties to our country and to those among whom we live. Then we have to think of our personal needs, read what will fortify, elevate and ennoble our minds, and get all the information we can as to the line of study or of occupation we have chosen as most suitable for our position and our faculties; and, finally, we should provide for our leisure hours some lighter forms of literature, which will give us in a pure and healthy form the recrea-

tion which is one of the necessities of a well ordered life.

From what has already been said, it will be seen that the choice of books is a very personal and individual matter. What is helpful and profitable in one case may be useless and even hurtful in another. But the knowledge (as far as it is given us to attain to it in this world) and a firm grasp of the great supernatural truths is necessary for all; and none should neglect or put aside the reading of such books as will increase and strengthen their faith. Among these is the Holy Bible, the Book of books—as its name, derived from Greek, implies—the Sacred Scriptures, written under the direction of the Holy Ghost. But as the Bible is the basis of the spiritual, even more than that of the intellectual life, we shall refer to it together with other books that treat of the science of faith—such as the catechism and the liturgy of the Church, at greater length under the head of “Spiritual Work.”

Meanwhile, among the books likely to have a strengthening and formative influence on our minds, may be reckoned those which treat of philosophical subjects. These open before us ever receding horizons, stimulate us in the search for truth, and by leading us to examine the laws by which men are generally guided in their actions, help us in the acquisition of the most practical of all kinds of knowledge, the knowledge of ourselves.

Yet it is not always safe nor wise to encourage women in the reading of what are called—often falsely—philosophical works. It is with philosophy as with light, the brighter the rays, the darker the shadows. And the labyrinths into which false systems of philosophy have led their votaries are indeed tangled and bewildering. It is necessary always to bear in mind that these systems are not true philosophy, but only usurp her name. Philosophy has been defined by the greatest of her expositors as “the science of the origin of things,” or again, “the science of self-existence,” that is, of matter and of form, of causes, whether predisposing or final. Or again, “the science which aspires to happiness.” While if we take the derivation of the word as our guide—*Philo* I love, *sophia* wisdom—we see that it is the science by help of which man seeks to know and to love God, for all true philosophers love and seek wisdom, eternal and infinite. Should we not do wrong in turning away from a science which will at once enlighten our minds and bring us finally to the Source of all Light?

Again, Bossuet tells us that “wisdom consists in the knowledge of God and of ourselves,” and that it is by knowing ourselves as we really are that we shall rise to the knowledge of God. Between these two terms, or rather, between this starting point and this goal, the knowledge of ourselves and the knowledge of God, are placed the different branches of philosophy



which may be considered as complete in themselves: psychology, which is the study of the soul's faculties and of their mode of action; logic, which defines the laws that govern the intellect and applies them to the pursuit of truth; ethics, which treats of the principles by which man's volition should be regulated; metaphysics and natural theology, which help us to discern the principles and the causes which lead to the true knowledge of God. Briefly, it may be said that philosophy teaches us not only to know, but likewise to rule and govern our minds and our thoughts, that by it we come to understand what are our aptitudes and what are our limitations, and how each may be wisely directed; by it our will is developed and moulded to the fulfilment of the divine purposes in our behalf, and thus shall we be brought, step by step, to the fountain-head of all wisdom, and finally to eternal life.

It may be said that all this can be as well learnt from a penny catechism. To this the answer is at once, "Yes" and "No." Unquestionably it is better to know one's catechism and remain ignorant of philosophy, than to know philosophy and not the truths which the catechism teaches; but between these two kinds of knowledge there is no antagonism, each is the complement of the other. And at the present time probably a greater number of people act from reason than from faith, unmindful that reason was bestowed on them in order that

by it they might find out that faith is not contrary to reason, but rather strengthens and exercises it. More than this, faith is the sure defence of reason against aberrations into which, if left to herself alone, she might easily wander.

Philosophy, when applied to the history of the human race, becomes a distinct and important science, giving sequence and value to what would else be but a string of desultory incidents, enabling us to discern the unbroken chain of cause and effect of which the motive powers are the forces of nature, acting under the wise direction of a merciful Providence, "all things working for our good," so that we may in the present time, which alone is really ours, use the experience of past ages for the benefit of future generations. And from philosophy, as applied to the social organization, two branches of science have sprung: political economy and sociology. Both of these are in a certain sense new, because the causes from which they arise are comparatively modern. Political economy teaches us the laws which regulate labour and profit, or rather those by which profit is, whether directly or indirectly yet invariably, derived from labour. This science pertains to the moral order, for it has to do with the human race, which by its labour creates wealth. And the special aim of its researches should be to apply man's strength and knowledge to the well-being of individuals and of the masses. It



is a science of which the importance can hardly be exaggerated, for it should lead us to the knowledge and understanding of the causes which lie at the root of prosperity and of misery, and show us how to make the one enduring, and to conquer or at least to dominate the other. Sociology has to do with the organization and the development of our social life. By the study of the phenomena which preceded the social order to which we ourselves belong, the principles which have influenced the moral and intellectual development of mankind are defined and analysed. And as the social order develops and progresses, so also will the twin sciences of political economy and sociology be continually extended in area and enriched by experience. Those who study them attentively, and carefully note each phase, have the immense advantage of understanding that there are social developments which cannot be bound or fettered. Therefore, they do not waste their strength in opposing currents they cannot control, but are ready when the hour strikes to take their place at the helm, and may thus succeed in saving the social order from the thousand perils that beset its onward course.

The Bourbons used to be taunted with having "learnt nothing and forgotten nothing." But this turn of mind is a very common one, and by no means confined to any particular family or caste; there are a great many people who find it difficult to forget the rights and privileges they

formerly enjoyed, even if they were of little real advantage at the best, and who are now unprepared to fulfil the obligations which social changes have imposed on them. The chief result of this obstinate adhesion to antiquated forms is that they who persist in it lose their opportunities, and suffer from the action of forces they might have beneficially influenced. No one makes it a reproach to a young man that he is no longer contented with the things which pleased him in his boyhood, and claims the privileges to which manhood entitles him. Likewise, he who wishes to exercise rights in the social order in which he is placed must not try to retard its progress ; he must make the spirit of the age his own ; not to be tossed by every gust of its shifting and uncertain doctrines, but to fill his sails with the bounding breeze of its irresistible strength. People in our days are athirst for independence and well-being, and there is nothing intrinsically wrong in this ; each human being has the right to endeavour, in the words of the Church's collect, "to attain salvation and freedom" ; the last as well as the first, though in subordination to it. And, in the same way, the endeavour to better the conditions of our lives is not only a right, but in many cases becomes a duty. Societies and nations are built up and established in proportion to the strength and virtue of the individuals of which they are by aggregation composed, and to the efforts these individuals make to raise

themselves to a higher level of prosperity and of civilization.

But right and fully justified as are these progressive tendencies, they need to be controlled, lest the good quality of industry and economy should develop into overgreed of gain, rapacity and injustice, and the desire for well-being into sloth, idleness, and the substitution of the work of others for our own. Just as matter has to be subjected to material laws, so must all human actions be kept in subjection to moral laws, else they will produce evil, not good.

These moral laws by which we, both collectively and individually, must regulate our actions, have to be studied and examined, lest by rashly accepting theories fair in seeming, but rotten at the core, great national calamities ensue. Therefore, that branch of social science which makes us understand the lives led by those around us, the trend of their thoughts, the whence and whither of their modes of action, is useful for women as well as for men. And there is one branch of social science which is, in its first beginnings at least, especially woman's domain, and to which she should devote the best part of her intellectual powers—that of education, which will teach her how to mould the faculties and influence the aims of the rising generation.

It may be said of education that it is the application of philosophic methods to the process of teaching. A careful observer of children's

ways and habits will become acquainted with their dispositions and their aptitudes, and then, by a wise use of material things, will form their characters and their intellects. *Ars artium*—the art of arts—so a Latin proverb tells us, is that of directing the human mind; and in the case of children it is principally to women that this lofty but arduous task is committed.

Children for the most part have youthful parents; as a rule, young mothers. This is a wise provision, for the work of education requires the strength and energy of youth. But there is a drawback in the inexperience which is the inevitable corollary of youth, and we may be tempted to wonder why God has confided a task, of such crucial importance to untrained hands. To this the answer is, that He gives to each of us the graces necessary for our state of life, and, above all, to the humble of heart; hence young mothers must not be discouraged by the magnitude of the task that lies before them; they have only to bear in mind that the graces they need must be impetrated with humility and with perseverance; while readily acknowledging their shortcomings and their insufficient equipment they must supplement it by procuring well recommended and serious books treating of the education of children, read them thoroughly and carefully, yet guard themselves against any too hasty application of what they read; want of prudence on this point might lead to disastrous results. And when they have done conscien-

tiously all that depends on them, they must then commit the result to God.

It has been said that a child's education begins with its birth; but we may go back further still, for a child's character is so much influenced by hereditary tendencies that every woman should be made to recognize the fact that it is with her own education that that of her children commences. It is by moulding her own judgement, her own will, her physical and mental capacities wisely and well, that she prepares the foundation on which the education of her children will have to be built up. For a woman who really and truly wishes to fulfil her duties as a mother thoroughly, the process of self-education has no interval and no finality; she will make it her constant aim to conform her life and her actions to the Divine and Eternal purposes, not only as regards herself personally, but also as the mistress of her house, the teacher of her children, the beneficent and inspiring genius of her home. To one who so conceives her duties and her responsibilities no branch of knowledge will seem unprofitable or alien; in each and every one she will find nourishment for her intellect; from each she will gain, at one time or another, strength in her constant endeavour to bring enlightenment, help and warm Christian sympathy to all who come within the sphere of her influence.

Those who do not possess any scientific knowledge have difficulty in understanding and appreciating it; but a very limited amount of study



shows the advantage of such knowledge and the variety of ways in which it becomes of practical value. Again, there is such close affinity between the various provinces of science that knowledge of any one of them is a key to the comprehension of all the rest; and what may be called the science of living is in touch with all the other sciences, deriving from them sustenance and strength.

To shape one's life aright becomes comparatively an easy task to those whose minds have been strengthened by systematic culture to meet every difficulty with energy and intelligence; they who have trained themselves to do the allotted task of each day earnestly will find their pleasure in the work itself; they who have steadily cultivated their minds and striven unremittingly to use and double their talents will reap a rich harvest to be garnered in everlasting dwellings. But even had we traversed all the realms of science and solved all its riddles, we should still by no means have exhausted one tithe of the treasures a beneficent Providence has placed within our reach. Man, made in God's image, destined for heavenly joys, has an innate desire of the beautiful; and any scheme of education which does not seek to develop and nourish this instinct, planted by God Himself in the human heart, is maimed and incomplete.

Some germ of this aspiration towards the beautiful exists in all of us. The first glance of the new-born babe turns towards the light—a

thing beautiful in itself and one of the initial conditions of beauty. But when childhood has passed away, love and desire of the beautiful takes many and various forms. It may aspire to nothing higher than the glittering beads and gaudy plumage which make up the gala dress of the South Sea islanders, or to representations of crime and cynicism, such as are too often given in modern theatres. Or it may be revealed to the earnest student in Homer's magic page, or in the contemplation of one of Michael Angelo's masterpieces.

To lift this desire of the beautiful, which is indicated in the child's love of light and brightness and in the savage's love of gew-gaws, to the highest ideals, to make it a powerful instrument in the purification and in the ennobling of human lives, is the special mission of literature and art; their influence may help to raise the pole of national morality to the highest levels, or sink it down to the lowest. There is no surer sign of the uprising of a nation than the employment of its artistic talent in noble uses; no surer sign of its decadence than a debased and degraded art.

And as with nations, so with individuals—the goal to which their innate love of the beautiful is directed is a matter of vital importance. Men who have a highly developed sense of that beauty which is revealed in eternal truths, and is the outcome of obedience to heavenly laws, will in their own lives reproduce something of the



truth, the order, the harmony their souls have desired.

There is a saying often quoted from the French philosopher, La Bruyère, "Good taste comes from good sense." May we not rather say that when the taste is directed by fixed principles and moulded on right lines, good sense will be the result? Anyhow, it is certain that our tastes have an immense influence on the conduct of our lives. Is not the greater portion of many people's time taken up in the pursuit of whatever seems to them at the moment most desirable? And is not the gain or the loss of something that has caught their taste or fancy the source of at least half their joys and their sorrows? With most of us taste influences very much our choice of occupations, our ways of living, our social relations, our expenditure, our dietary, our studies, our recreations and our pleasures. For this reason it is necessary that our tastes should develop in accordance with good and sound principles. To achieve this we shall find the best and surest help in the cultivation of good literature and noble art. And if an intelligent understanding of the true constituents of the beautiful is desirable for all, it is especially so for women, whose impressionable natures, prone to idealization, make them, even more than men, liable to what is called in Holy Writ "the blindness of vanity."

There is no better safeguard against this danger—which consists in mistaking evil for

good, falsehood for truth, glamour for light—than sedulously to cultivate in ourselves the love of all that we *know* to be really good, honourable, pure, elevated, and therefore beautiful. A mind fortified by the perusal of such works as those of Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Skarga, Mickiewicz and Krasinski,\* is not likely to decline to lower standards nor to be tempted by false and meretricious charms; and the same may be said of those who have formed their tastes by studying the great masterpieces of art. And it is essential to bear in mind that the touchstone of true beauty, both in art and in literature, is in the faithful and loyal presentment of things beautiful in themselves and worthy of being reproduced. It is a fatal error to stimulate our imaginations and feast our eyes with images and phrases which, even if the subjects they bring before us are in themselves noble and elevated, yet depict them in an exaggerated or rhetorical manner that is hurtful because unnatural. And still more carefully should we shun those who, under the pretext of putting truth before everything, misuse their talents by the delineation of things materially or morally depraved.

While we admit that there can be no real beauty where truth is violated, and that the realities of life are not always externally beautiful, we must remember that the true aims of art are to kindle in us the love of the beautiful, and

---

\* The three last are well-known Polish authors.

to enable us to discern the beauty which underlies all great truths and simple facts of life, and by doing this to stimulate us to the search for, and desire of, beauty in its highest and ultimate expression. Nor can any work be looked on as really artistic which does not fulfil these conditions. And as any one rightly alive to the importance of bodily health would refuse to live in insanitary surroundings, or to touch food that had putrefied, so they who value aright their spiritual and their intellectual health will shrink from all that is unseemly and repulsive, and even be repelled by anything that borders on mediocrity or vulgarity. Better abstain altogether from reading than read books that are unfit for our perusal, or sordid and worthless; better to have bare walls and empty albums than walls covered with trumpery decorations or albums filled with trash; better to leave music alone than spend hours in strumming bad music.

Those who wish to make themselves well acquainted with the masterpieces of art and literature should study them systematically and in chronological sequence, following the history of the great schools of painting and sculpture, and of the various epochs of literary glory throughout their inception, their zenith, and their decline; for there is hardly any branch of human achievement in which the study of the past is so instructive. They who are content to take their notions of what is artistic and beautiful from the changing fashions of the day will not find it easy,

should the occasion arise, to appreciate as they deserve the beauties of classical literature and art. And besides, they who try to form judgments on artistic matters from works which have not passed through the searching ordeal of time will be often, even if unconsciously, influenced by fleeting currents of opinion and by their personal likes or dislikes. This alone would be a sufficient reason for endeavouring to mould our taste by the study of those great masters whose works are hall-marked by the approval of many generations. It is in most cases a foolish waste of time for those who have not any very special aptitudes to take up such arts as painting or sculpture ; and in any case it is labour misapplied unless they are guided by competent teachers. But music stands on another plane ; there are so many occasions on which some knowledge of simple harmony can be utilized, whether in the service of the Church, or to give pleasure to others, or as needful recreation for oneself, that all should endeavour to improve to the utmost of their power any natural gift they may have in this direction. And it is well worth while to seize every opportunity of teaching or guidance, as, provided we study in the right method, it is not necessary to study very much. They who cannot attain to brilliant execution on any musical instrument can at least learn to play accurately by never attempting anything beyond their compass, while the thorough study of music exacts so much patience, perseverance

and precision, that it may be reckoned as a useful factor in the formation of character. In the selection of music we should be careful to choose the best. The principle that we should in every department of art study by preference the works of good masters applies specially to music, which exercises on many sensitive and highly-strung natures a remarkable influence. And besides, skilled musicians alone being able to form sound and critical judgements, for learners the wisest course is to keep to what is universally known as "classical music." They will thus escape the danger of spoiling their musical taste by accustoming it to faulty harmonies, a not uncommon misfortune, which is extremely difficult to repair. Vocal music has the advantage of not requiring any outlay in instruments, and is therefore within the means of a greater number of persons. There are few things which have such power to elevate the mind and influence it for good as church music, and especially plainsong, when rendered as it ought to be; by penetrating us with the sense of harmony and beauty it strengthens us against much that is evil. To spread zealously and widely the love of good church music is an apostolate in itself.

Some people have the strange notion that because they have fairly good voices and some ear for music they can sing sufficiently well. No one ventures to assert that the possession of the very best paints and brushes will make them artists; why, then, should uncultivated



physical gifts, without study or training, suffice to make a singer? On the contrary, method and training are here as indispensable as the voice itself, if not more so. For a very moderate voice well trained may give great pleasure to listeners, while the owner of a good voice badly taught is a terror to her acquaintances and a crying example of the evils of a neglected education. Finally, those whose voices, when put under training, prove not to be worth cultivating, are saved at least from losing their time.

Although the study of the fine arts is an important factor in our mental development, yet its primary object is to add to the pleasures and interests of our lives. We neither can nor ought to keep our minds in a constant state of intellectual activity and tension, for they need intervals of repose and leisure quite as much as our bodies. But as human beings, we have over the brute creation this immense superiority: that while horses, cattle, and all other animals take their rest in vacuous idleness, mankind, putting aside the time necessarily allotted to sleep, can rest from the fatigue engendered by one kind of occupation by taking up another; practically, it is by this change in our employments that we are most thoroughly rested. We should therefore endeavour so to regulate our lives that we can alternate habitually between manual, intellectual and spiritual labour, passing from one to the other; or we may find variety by changing from one branch to another of the same kind of work."



There are a considerable number of persons who, having no taste or aptitude for artistic occupations, would find neither rest nor pleasure in them; but all can have in reading a form of recreation at once instructive and enjoyable. This has been touched on before; we will now discuss it in somewhat more detail. If what we read for the purpose of instruction should not be of too heavy and serious a nature, neither should what we read in order to rest and recreate our minds be too light and frivolous; we should choose books which will help us, pleasantly and easily, to form our minds and ripen our judgements.

In the first category of recreative reading we may place travels, memoirs and biographies, which, without trying us by the strain on our attention, will yet add to our stock of knowledge both of the globe we live on and of our fellow men. This kind of reading gives besides to those who lead secluded, uneventful lives many of the advantages others gain by contact and experience; it serves to enlarge and stimulate our minds, and furnish us with models which may be advantageously imitated. For if sin and all evil things are spread by contagion and example, the story of an heroic life or the description of a noble people would still more surely inspire the desire of emulation and imitation. The proverb, "Tell me with whom you associate, and I will tell you what you are," is applicable to our intercourse, not only with

the living but with the dead whom we know by their deeds, by the story of their lives, and sometimes more intimately still by their writings. In this as in every other company let us take for our friends the best and the noblest, whose generous natures will teach us to harmonize discordant impulses and seek loftier ideals.

Among necessary reading, though in a much lower category, must be placed newspapers, which in all classes of society are now a matter of daily perusal. It is somewhat hard to classify them, as the designation covers an immense number and variety of publications with the most opposite views, tendencies and opinions. Perhaps the best plan is to seek answers to the following questions: Why should we read the papers? How much time should we allow for reading them? What papers should we read? We should read the papers if we find they help us to fulfil the duties of our position. If our friends and relations mix in public life we should have some understanding, and best a clear one, of the matters which occupy or interest them. We may often help them by pointing out items of news they may have overlooked and which it may be useful for them to know; and sometimes by a word in season exercise an influence for good. But women who take no interest in public affairs, and only read the papers for the sake of some idle, probably inaccurate, gossip, had much better leave them unread and employ their time in a more profitable way.

The answer to the second question depends on that made to the first. The time given to the reading of newspapers should be in proportion to the utility we derive from them. As to the question what newspapers we should read, it will suffice to say that if we only want to know in a general way what is going on in the world, a single paper may suffice. But if we wish to be really well informed as to the course of public affairs and of contemporary history, it is absolutely necessary to read newspapers holding different and contradictory opinions. And it is an excellent mental training to study the opposite views taken on most public questions: it saves us from taking our own opinions and views blindly and without due consideration from any one paper, and from attaching undue importance to journalistic utterances; and on matters in which we are personally interested, it is well to know beforehand with what kind and degree of opposition we have to reckon.

Finally comes the question of novel reading. We must begin by bearing in mind that this employment, though it may have its use in affording recreation, perhaps food for thought, yet never can be considered necessary or useful; that it should be limited in quantity, and that we must keep strictly to the rule of only reading such novels as are healthy in tone and in morals, well written and thus of some literary value; else it would be wrong to give up to such reading time which might be much better occupied.

Besides, they who indulge in unlimited novel reading will certainly often come across books that stain the imagination, or give false or visionary ideas of life ; in any case their emotions will have been squandered and their powers of observation and of memory weakened by the habit of taking interest in foolish and unreal things, their ordinary occupations will become distasteful to them, and the difficulty of giving sustained attention to serious matters will be very much increased.

On the other hand, persons whose minds are trained and educated, and who have intellectual capacity enough to enable them to choose wisely and consider carefully what they read, with firmly established principles on all matters of right and wrong-doing, may derive both pleasure and profit from the perusal of a well-written novel, especially if it mirrors, as some novels do, the ideas and tendencies of contemporary life. In the same way, those who are interested in history may glean much information from a good historical novel ; they who have appreciation of literary style will keenly enjoy the work of a great author ; they who are already skilled in discernment of character and have studied the influences that affect it may learn a good deal from a psychological novel, while others whose minds are unformed and untrained would only gain from such books the means of getting through some idle hours, probably without remembering more than the names of the characters and a few incidents of the story.

Still there remain a certain number of people who, whether from want of education, or from some deficiency in their natural capacity, or from having frittered away their minds upon trifles, seem unable to take in much moral instruction unless it is presented to them under the guise of a tale or a romance—like children who will not take their powders without jam. Such people may really be the better for moderate novel reading, but then it must be carefully chosen, so as to give them healthy and accurate views of life, and gradually lift their minds to dwell on its noble aspects, or at least lead them to sound moral conclusions. Books of sordid or immoral tendencies are to such persons the deadliest of poisons.

But it behoves us all to be careful and conscientious in our choice of reading. Many books have a tendency, sometimes avowed, sometimes disguised, to undermine religious beliefs. Now few things are more difficult than to restore faith that has been thus weakened. They who imprudently allow their religious convictions to be tampered with seldom, if ever, regain them. And how grievous is their loss! When they want light and counsel, to whom will they go? From what source will they draw the patience and perseverance, the calm and the consolation, so needed amid life's bitter trials? If they ask for help, who will give it? If they fall, no earthly power can raise them up!

We must also avoid books of which the ten-



dency is to excite the passions or stain the imagination; likewise those which, by making good appear evil and evil good, falsify the conscience. Much harm is also done by reading books which, by giving false and delusive views of life, make its stern realities intolerable. And all idle and purposeless reading has another consequence: it leads to day-dreaming and castle-building, in which the powers of the mind are frittered away, for nothing weakens the intellectual faculties so much as to let them be absorbed by trifles which merely amuse without requiring any serious effort.

To get real gain from our reading it is not sufficient to have turned over the pages of a great many books; we must have read them attentively in due order and sequence, so as to have become familiar with the subjects they treat of, and be able to discuss them with others. There is no better practice than to repeat the substance of what we have lately read in a consecutive and accurate way; what we thus narrate remains strongly impressed on our memories.

In all cases we should carefully note the title of any book we read, and of the author's name if possible, with the date at which it was written. They who keep a written record of every work they have read, with a summary of its contents and the impressions it left on their minds, will soon find it a valuable possession. The habit of making extracts from the books we read is also excellent; they should not be lengthy, but chosen



with care ; short condensed sentences in which some important truth or striking thought is well and clearly expressed are the most useful, and teach us at once how to think and how to express our thoughts. When this practice has been begun early in life and persevered in faithfully, the mind becomes a real treasure-house ; and the receptivity of young brains, which makes early impressions almost indelible, cannot be turned to better account.

Meanwhile, as to the precise nature of the intellectual work each of us should individually take up, no hard and fast line can be drawn ; we are all free to choose the kinds we believe to be best suited to our personal capacities and tastes. The vital points are to use and to work all our faculties, that they may be developed and not atrophied, and not to limit our aims to self-improvement only, but while we strengthen and cultivate our intellectual talents to look on them chiefly as instruments destined to higher uses than we can now understand or even imagine.

## CHAPTER IV

### On Spiritual Work

MANUAL and intellectual work will not enable us to attain the end for which God has placed us in the world, unless accompanied by interior or spiritual work. But so many false ideas have been spread about this spiritual work that it would be well for us to consider attentively to what it tends, on what it rests, and how we should set about it.

Christ has indicated our goal in the words, "Be ye also perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." To our weak humanity this seems an extraordinary command, but it is full of consolation and encouragement when we remember that God does not desire impossible things, and that a corresponding grace always accompanies His orders. Besides, it is evident that these words apply to a relative perfection, human, not divine, as when we read in Genesis: "God saw all that He had created, and it was perfect, each after its own kind." For all was as He wished it to be, and in accordance with His will. On this perfection depends, and for this we should strive. "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me," are St Paul's words, and he added: "Be ye followers also of me as I am of Christ."

Thus is perfection placed within man's reach,

as the goal to which every life on earth should aspire. In order to show us what man was intended to be in the Divine purpose, God became man for our sakes, and we men should, for the love of God and in order to fulfil His will, become, in the words of St Paul, "other Christs."

Such then is the aim of spiritual work ; and, like manual and intellectual work, it must be accomplished in the sweat of our face, and seems beyond our strength when we remember that we, mere creatures, have to form in ourselves the image of the Creator—we sinners, the image of the Saviour !

This trying, and often for years apparently fruitless labour, is twofold. It may be compared at once to painting and to sculpture. The painter puts his pigments on the canvas and thus creates the forms and the colours necessary for the expression of his thought ; the sculptor on the other hand attains his end by cutting away and clearing from the marble what is superfluous to the rendering of his idea. Spiritual work is, in short, an art analogous to both these arts, and consists in the painting of forms previously sculptured. We have here a true picture of the work of a soul desirous of creating in itself a faithful likeness of Christ, and of rejecting all that conflicts with this resemblance ; correcting its own faults and impressions, and acquiring the virtues and habits that will produce this likeness. The chief difference is that in art the

work of the painter can only be done after the work of the sculptor, while in the travail of the soul the two must be simultaneous.

This spiritual work is easier to those who have begun it from childhood, and whom a good education has prepared for it. For is not all education worthy of the name the moulding and forming our minds and our characters, the raising of them to a higher level? But though the fact of having had a good education will make our task easier, yet as it is chiefly the result of the care and of the trouble our parents and our teachers have taken in our behalf, the merit of it is theirs, and we are not free from the duty of personal effort in the matter of our salvation, nor from the interior work that constitutes our proper merit and desert. It is to this that we must apply the words of St Paul when he says that we must "make up what is wanting to the sufferings of Christ"; it is in this that consists the warfare which the apostle requires of the soldiers of Christ. Only it must be remembered that what constitutes the value of our acts is not their importance nor their number, but the spirit in which they are performed; it is not a question of doing extraordinary things, but of doing our best in the daily requirements of life.

We must consider carefully where our spiritual work is to begin. Returning to our comparison of the sculptor's and the painter's arts, let us watch them at their work. First they seek a model; having found it, they study it atten-

tively, and then choose the colours and the materials for their work.

What they have to seek God has already given to us. Our model is Christ; we ourselves are the material to be worked on; the chisel and the brush are, first, the word of God and His laws, then all the means the Church has provided for our sanctification, with the circumstances of our lives and those of our fellow men among whom God has placed us.

Our first duty, therefore, is to contemplate Christ, to study His life and teaching, remembering how He, our King and our Master, for us men and for our sakes was made man; how from the cradle to the grave He lived in poverty and sorrow, in the midst of the ignorant, the ungrateful and the perverse; how He became a little child, an artisan, a working man, a martyr, a victim, for our sakes.

Christ did all that was necessary for our instruction, our consolation, our redemption; He suffered all things, drinking the cup of bitterness to the dregs, and thereby fulfilling His Father's will. "*Consummatum est*—It is consummated," was His cry on the cross; then only did He render His soul up to God.

And our work, whether exterior or interior, should have no other end than the fulfilling of God's will in our regard, so that in the hour of death we too may be able to say when we yield up our souls to the Divine Judge: "Lord, all Thou hast commanded us we have striven to do,



the tasks Thou hast laid on us we have tried to accomplish." How important it is that we should endeavour to understand, not superficially, but thoroughly, *why* God created each of us individually, to what He has called us, what He exacts of us before we are judged by Him, before our thoughts, our words, our acts, our whole life, are placed in the scales of divine justice! Each of us, as we come into the world, receives, as it were in germ, all that is necessary in order to accomplish the mission that the Will of God has prepared for us. This mission is different for each individual, and it is part of our spiritual work to discover the will of God both in regard to mankind generally and to ourselves in particular. This once known, it becomes our duty to direct all our strength to its perfect fulfilment, and to reject manfully all that opposes it. Apart from God nothing is in itself good or bad, desirable or undesirable; everything has value only in so far as it conduces to the accomplishment of the Divine Will. We ourselves are the material out of which "other Christs" have to be formed; our natural dispositions may make this duty easier, or they may make it more difficult; but in no case can they dispense us from it. If "measure, weight and order" are necessary in manual and in intellectual work, they are still more necessary in spiritual work. Therefore, being convinced of the necessity we lie under of accomplishing our allotted task, we must study the principles which should regulate it and ac-



custom ourselves to apply them wisely and discreetly.

These principles are derived from eternal truths, and are therefore themselves eternal; they can only be learned from the words of God Himself, that is, from Holy Writ. Hence it is that spiritual work must begin by reading and meditating on the word of God. But in order to read the Scriptures profitably, special dispositions, education and preparations are required, which all do not possess. Therefore the Church, like a true mother, has considered the aptitudes of her children, and, putting herself on the level of each, and considering the needs of each, explains to them the word of God. Her teaching is found in the catechism; and on the very first page, in terms accessible to the simplest intelligence, we find an answer to the question so vital for all, and to which neither science nor any other teacher has ever given a reply; though the voice of sorrowing humanity has asked it so often, none but the catechism has answered it. Why was life given us? whither does it lead? what is its goal? And the whole direction of our lives is in the answer.

The catechism points out the goal and the means of attaining it, telling us what we should do and from what we must abstain; it teaches us the knowledge of good and of evil, of what is worthy of being sought and of what must be rejected—the crucial knowledge without which all other knowledge is incomplete and may become

hurtful. By the study of the catechism our judgement, conscience and will are formed and moulded; it produces virtues that serve to attain to eternal life, and are also the only foundation on which temporal life and social relations can securely rest.

No other teacher can give us the light needed to discern the will of God amid life's crowded medley; its divine origin is proved in that it is as applicable to the present day, and to the conditions of modern progress, as it was in the most ancient times and to the most backward nations. Never has there been need to alter its formulas nor to revoke the truths it affirms. To know the catechism well is of the utmost importance to the mature as well as to children, to those who command as well as to those who obey. And to these last the knowledge of that fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom is specially necessary.

All therefore should learn by heart the catechism taught in the schools of their diocese, so as to be able to define exactly the principles of their faith. We should also study a more detailed one, that we may not be limited to the letter of God's law, but be saturated with its meaning and fill our minds with the spirit of faith.

We should also be familiar with the Liturgy. As children of the Catholic Church we must endeavour to lead her life, not as passing guests, but as members of the family, understanding her

ceremonies and functions, united with her in mind and in spirit. We should know the day of the celebration of each of her feasts, and all that relates to it ; understand each part of the Mass, and the meaning of the objects of our worship ; use the prayers of the Liturgy, and as far as possible learn them by heart ; so that all the ceremonies of the Church may have a living significance, and not be, so far as we are concerned, mere inanimate pictures, devoid of meaning.

It is likewise most useful that we should know the history of the Church from her first days to the present time. A thorough knowledge of this would enlighten us as to many of the accusations made against her by her adversaries, and teach us that if, alas ! there have been Judases, their acts have not been able to destroy the belief in the divine origin of the Church, but rather confirm it ; as the betrayal of Judas did not destroy the teaching of Christ, but contributed to His triumph. God, and God alone, can use a frail human being to accomplish and confirm what is divine and saintly. Human institutions maintain themselves only as long as they are governed by intelligent and virtuous men ; the Church endures in spite of the crime of Judas, in spite of the treasons, unworthinesses and crimes of other Judases, and thereby proves by her very existence that the power which sustains her is not human, but divine. In order to incite ourselves to a more courageous and more

exact imitation of Christ we should study the lives of the saints. In these we must consider chiefly the zeal and fidelity with which they devoted themselves to the imitation of Christ, and not arrogate to ourselves the right to copy them in all the details of their lives. Christ is the one and only model for us all; and the saints, by reason of peculiar graces, personal inspirations and individual vocations, have done things that are not only impossible to the generality of men, but that, without special conditions, might be injurious. Therefore, their lives must be studied with discretion; we should do well to select those written by the best authors, and such especially as will give us indications suited to the particular conditions in which we ourselves may be placed.

For the life of each individual saint has its own special message and lesson for the faithful. The lives of the founders of the great religious orders show us the difficulties they had to meet and the means they took to create the congregations which, thanks to the strength of their organization, have lasted for centuries; those of missionaries tell us of all they did and suffered for the love of God and of souls; while it is more excellent still to read the lives of those saints who lived under the same conditions as we ourselves do and had similar duties to fulfil, or of those who were distinguished by the virtues we most need. Although, as has been said, it is difficult to begin the spiritual life by reading the

Holy Scriptures, yet it is necessary always to bear in mind, while studying the Catechism, that it is above all an abridgement of Scripture. The Old Testament is the ante-type of the New; with the latter begins the history of the Church, and there also do we find the first lives of the saints.

Just as the child of a widowed mother asks as it grows up what were the last words and wishes of that father for whom its mother has sown in its heart the germs of respect and love, and desires all the information it can have that can help it to understand him better, so we, the children of the Catholic Church, often feel the desire to know ourselves the source whence our mother the Church draws her inspiration when she speaks to us of our Father in heaven.

As we know, on account of the false translations made by heretics, the Church many centuries ago imposed certain conditions on the reading of Holy Scripture. But at the present time, as the Abbe Kaysiewicz points out, the danger lies not so much in false interpretations of Holy Scripture as in the tendency to deny their divine origin and entirely reject them. And thus, as the times have changed, so also have the conditions imposed by the Church. Pius IX and subsequently Leo XIII, when approving of translations of the Scriptures into modern languages, recommended them to the faithful, telling them that if they cannot read the Latin Vulgate, they should read exclusively those translations which



have been approved by the Church and to which are added commentaries which also she sanctions. To those who thus read Holy Scripture Leo XIII has granted many indulgences.

In order to read the Bible with profit we should open the sacred volume, not from idle curiosity, but with the firm intention of studying the word of God, and of applying it to ourselves. We must read with humility, bearing in mind that many passages are beyond our comprehension, and that we must not presume to judge what we do not understand, nor to be scandalized thereby. Nor will it suffice to read the Holy Scriptures once or twice—no, nor ten times; they must be read daily throughout life with a regularity that neither the pressure of work or business, nor travel, nor sickness, should have power to break. A portion, at least, of the Scriptures should always be within reach of our hand, and read at a fixed time: "All Scripture . . . . is profitable for . . . . instruction in righteousness,"\* are the words of St Paul. And in so doing, we shall be treading closely in the footsteps of the saints. St Cecilia never parted from her Testament; she carried it always about with her. St Catherine of Siena specially loved the epistles of St Paul, while St Jerome taught the Roman ladies to learn the whole psalter, and a great portion of the Scriptures, by heart. St Bernard always read them with close attention, taking the sacred books in their

---

\* 2 Tim. iii, 16.



order, saying that the difficulties he found in one were explained in the others.

And in our own times the students of the Polytechnic College in Paris asked one of their comrades, whom we know as Père Gratry, how it was that he was always at the head of his class in mathematics, and at the same time had so much originality and fulness of thought in his philosophical exercises. His answer was: "It is because, in spite of the heavy amount of work required for the college, I manage to reserve a certain portion of time daily for reading and meditating on the Holy Scriptures, and thus I draw inspiration from its very source."

The Abbé Vigouroux, in his "Manual on the Bible," advises the reading of the sacred books first from end to end, until we have a clear idea of the whole; then to take them one by one, studying them thoroughly; at each fresh reading we shall find more light and fresh grace. But reading and studying are not the sole constituents of our spiritual work, they are but the basis and the preparation. Words, even the words of God, remain to us but as a dead letter unless we, by some corresponding effort, transmute them into facts. Therefore, our real spiritual work only begins in earnest when the principle of faith we have imbibed pervades and influences the details of our life. And this union between the Divine words and our actions is best accomplished by meditation on the precepts of God and of the Church, and by considering

the methods by which we can bring them to bear on our own souls and the duties of our state.

We must endeavour to make meditation alternately the whip and the curb of our spiritual life; using it now to stimulate us to greater efforts, now to keep us back where prudence commands; or again we should let it be to us what the helm and the sails are to the ship afloat on the ocean wave, the means by which we can most easily and with the least amount of labour reach our destination. But the first fruit of our meditations must be to show forth in our lives and in our actions the teachings of Him who has told us that He is "the way, the truth, and the life." By continually searching in our catechisms and in the Holy Scriptures for a clearer knowledge of God, we shall come to understand that we cannot profit passively without any effort on our own part by the sacrifice which Christ made of His life for our salvation; we shall realize that He is not only our Saviour, but also the Master with whose doctrine our whole lives must be imbued, the model we must imitate if we would gain eternal life. And when we have fully grasped the truth that our one unvarying aim must be the love and the service of God, that He has given us as our model His Son, who lived and worked and suffered in conformity to the will of His heavenly Father, and that therefore we too must so live and work and suffer that the Divine will may likewise be fulfilled in us—when we

have through meditation plumbed and fathomed, as far as in us lies, the patience, the humility, the sufferings and the goodness of Christ, then must we turn our eyes inwards, examine our own souls, in which we should have formed anew the faithful image of Him; or at least endeavour to see what must be transformed in our characters, what we must take out of our lives and what we must put into them, in order to attain this our desired end.

Let us ask ourselves: Whence comes our coldness in the service of God and of our neighbour? Why are we so lacking in zeal for God's service—for the conversion of sinners, the care of the sick, in comforting the afflicted, in instructing the ignorant? Is it not from self-love, from the concentration of all our thoughts and aims on our own concerns solely? But if we would imitate Christ, we must begin by rooting out the love of self; for Christ has said that he who would save his own soul must not spare himself in the service of others.

Again, what is it that hinders us from being "meek and humble of heart," as Christ, both by word and by example, has taught us we should be? Why is it that we so easily give way to irritability, to impatience, to ill temper, to feelings of anger, perhaps even of hatred? If we examine our consciences closely we shall probably find that the source of all these evils is pride, the giving of the first place to our own thoughts, wishes and inclinations. If we would be servants

of Christ, this idol must likewise be overthrown and destroyed.

And if we do not fulfil the duties and obligations God has imposed on us, is it not on account of our sloth and self-indulgence? Let us then do violence to our rebellious natures and take up courageously the burden of our daily duties; let us carry our cross, following Christ step by step, marching onward in His footsteps till our earthly task is completed.

But we must always bear in mind that, as we have said before, the spiritual life has a twofold aim. We have not only to destroy all that hinders us from forming Christ within us: we have also to develop all that will strengthen our spiritual growth. And there are many people who concentrate their efforts so exclusively on one of these aims that they practically overlook the other. They struggle valiantly against their evil inclinations, they sorrowfully set down all their faults and failures, doing penance for them perhaps beyond the limits of their strength, until the smallness of the result obtained almost tempts them to despair. Others, on the contrary, start with ardent zeal and love for sacred things, but, not having begun their spiritual life by endeavouring to purify their souls, they have "built their house on sand," and their labour comes to nought.

In the order divinely ordained for the spiritual life, the surest way to eradicate our faults and weaknesses is by acquiring the opposite virtues: we must triumph over evil by doing good. We

are not, of course, speaking of those grievous and mortal sins extirpation of which must come before everything else, but of those lesser faults and frailties that it is so difficult entirely to destroy. Just as each sin has, in a certain sense, the germ in it of all other sins, so also every virtue has in it the germ of all the other virtues ; and those who are but beginners would often do well to cultivate the good inclinations which are most easy and natural to them, using them as steps to attain virtues which seem beyond their powers. We sometimes see negligent gardeners pull up good plants together with weeds, and in an unconsidered struggle against evil inclinations the same thing may happen. They who, lest they should be betrayed into a fault, keep their natural inclinations repressed and stifled, often lose the spontaneity and energy of character that is so invaluable in all spiritual conflict, and become narrow, faint-hearted, timid, self-engrossed ; filtering and analysing their thoughts and their failings, turning for ever within themselves in a circle that has no issue ; while they who base their efforts for the reformation of their faults on the practice of the opposing virtue will steer clear of these rocks, and be in a condition far more favourable to progress.

If, for instance, we discern that we are intensely sensitive to criticism, that we cannot endure a censorious word, however justly deserved ; that if we are not objects of interest to those with whom we live, we become depressed ;



that we are never really happy unless praised and flattered, we can no longer conceal from ourselves that pride has usurped the place of reason in our character, that it is our besetting sin. Then if we recall how hateful pride is in God's sight, how, as He has told us, He "resists the proud, and reserves His graces for the humble," we realize that a sin so heinous must be at any cost rooted out from our souls. But how are we to set about this difficult task? Are we to combat our pride by repressing its manifestations, by confessing it and doing penance for it when our weakness betrays us into fresh falls? This is what many well-intentioned persons do, and do rightly; still the method is a slow one, and often leads through failure to discouragement. Far better is it to grasp our nettle and, not confining ourselves to a defensive warfare, boldly to take the offensive. Where pride once reigned we must set up truth in its place, saturate our souls with truth, love it, make it known even at our own expense; firmly resolving henceforth to feign nothing, to alter nothing, to exaggerate nothing for the sake of ministering to our vanity. From truth thus practised will spring humility, and our purified and strengthened souls will cherish even the truths that humiliate us. And humiliations voluntarily accepted, and ever sought for truth's own sake, will curb, conquer and finally annihilate pride even in its last stronghold.

In the same way charity—the love of God, of our country, of knowledge, of all that is good—



will force us to work till our natural indolence is overcome. The love of Christ, and devotion to His Passion, invite to mortification, and mortification overcomes sensuality. Love of the poor and of those who suffer, by awakening the desire to help them, stimulates generosity and roots out avarice and egotism; while intellectual occupation destroys idle curiosity and the useful employment of time prevents gossip.

Nothing will bring our faults and our imperfections so vividly before us as frequent and earnest meditation on the life and teaching of Christ. And painful as this knowledge of self must inevitably be, we must not shrink from it nor be discouraged by it. The clear perception of our needs is a special grace of God and a sign of approaching progress. We know that dust is no thicker in sunshine than in shadow, but where the sun's rays fall it is more easily seen, and, therefore, more quickly removed, whereas in darkness it is neither seen nor removed. So it is in the spiritual order: the sight and the knowledge of our weakness can only come to us by the help of divine light, and the more light God gives us the more certain we may be that He will not refuse the grace needed to make the light we receive subserve the amendment of our lives.

The clear vision of our shortcomings which we attain through meditation will incite us to regret them. This sorrow is salutary; it should not lead to discouragement but act on the soul as "the early and the latter rain," that fertilizes a

hitherto arid soil, and make it bring forth humility and contrition ; these again will in their turn bear fruit by giving us strength and courage to make the good resolutions we need.

But sorrow for our sins needs to be tested by its fruits. When we are not content with grieving over the past, when we do not waste our time in vague projects of improvement in the future, but bring forth works of penance and strive earnestly to reform our lives, then we may be assured that our contrition comes from God and will lead us to Him.

The past is ours no longer; we must leave it in God's hands, trusting to His mercy. Christ has forbidden us to dwell anxiously on the future, for doing this we shall receive neither light nor grace ; the most heroic resolutions based on contingencies that may never occur are castles in the air, and have neither fruit nor merit.

Let us, then, put away vain regrets over the past and idle day dreams as to the future, concentrating all the power of our will, all the light and grace bestowed on us, on the present day, the passing hour, the moment that will escape us unless we grasp it. Without losing time or opportunity, let us accomplish promptly the acts of virtue that lie within our reach, remembering that the least are often the best for us, because they can be done more easily, and as they pass unperceived by men, they give less food for vainglory, and for that very reason preserve all their merit before God.

If we desire to acquire any particular virtue, we must never let an occasion of practising it go by; for to neglect an opportunity of meriting is to take a backward step, and "he who having put his hand to the plough looks back, is not worthy of the kingdom of heaven."

The corruption of our nature makes progress in any virtue impossible unless we mortify the natural inclination opposed to it. The simple performance of any act of virtue implies the repression of the evil inclinations that are opposed to it, so that it may be said that every act of virtue is a mortification, and that every mortification of an evil passion is an act of the opposing virtue. Thus it is impossible to be just without first conquering our natural inclination to covetousness and selfishness, or to be prudent without restraining our hasty impulses, or temperate without curbing self-indulgence.

The extraordinary mortifications we read of in the lives of the saints require a special vocation and peculiar graces, but those who are seeking to advance in virtue will find every day, often every moment, opportunities of mortifying themselves in little things. We can mortify our tongues by keeping silence from idle words; our greediness by not eating or drinking save at our meals; we can mortify our curiosity by not looking at things which do not concern us; our indolence by working when and where it is right to work.

Every meditation we make should conclude with at least one clearly defined resolution. It is

not enough to resolve vaguely that we will endeavour to love God more, to acquire more virtues, to do good to our neighbour, unless we determine how we mean to prove our love of God, what virtue we mean to acquire, and in what way our neighbour is to be helped.

For vague resolutions, deciding nothing and leading to nothing, are perfectly useless either in worldly or in spiritual matters. In commerce and in agriculture the merchant knows what goods he needs, and he buys them; the farmer, when he has settled what seed he will sow, sows it—he never leaves anything to chance; all his work is foreseen and laid down in advance.

And so it must be with spiritual work. Once we have come to see, through meditation, what is lacking to us, what we must acquire, what is holding us back, and what we have to combat, our resolutions must be plain and practical, determining what we have to do day by day, and the time and manner of doing it.

But the merchant and the farmer are not content with having laid their work out in advance; they also keep careful count of all that relates to it, in order to know what are their expenses, their losses, and their gains. And a Christian solicitous of his spiritual progress will do likewise; in his evening examination of conscience he will take note of his failures, of their number, and of the tendencies they indicate, nor will he close his day without a fervent act of contrition and some effort towards the expiation of his faults,

even if it be but the loving and willing acceptance, in a spirit of penitent humility, of all the anxieties, disappointments and sufferings he has met with in the course of the day. Such acceptance, St Augustine tells us, suffices to expiate all involuntary imperfections, and even venial sins.

During the course of the morning's meditation the examination of conscience made the previous night should be recalled, in order to help us in making our resolutions for the day. Then we should decide during the morning's meditation on some one virtue to be practised during the day, and on the mortification which will be most useful to us, and finally make some clear and specific resolutions as to the line of conduct we are to pursue; the evening examination will show us how far we have been faithful to our purpose.

Meanwhile spiritual work is valueless unless accompanied by prayer. It is only through prayer that we can obtain the graces we need, the celestial dew and sunshine that make our labours fruitful. Through prayer many souls have gained supernatural wisdom far surpassing all they could have got from knowledge and meditation alone, for unless accompanied by prayer these are of little avail. The apostles knew this; therefore they asked their Divine Master to teach them how to pray, giving us thus a proof at once of their humility and of their wisdom. They knew that to pray as they ought



is no easy matter ; that at times it is most difficult ; recognizing their own ignorance, they asked for instruction. And we, too, following their example, must ask to be taught what prayer is, and what principles should guide it.

Christ, taking compassion on His apostles, and in answer to their request, taught them and us, in the few short petitions of "Our Father," all that we ought to ask for and the way in which we should ask it. Both then and at other times He instructed them in the practice of vocal prayer ; that is, of using forms of words applicable to the various circumstances of life, and which should never be far from our lips. And He confirmed His teaching by example. The Gospels tell us how for forty days He fasted and prayed in the desert ; how He used to pray all through the night in the mountains alone. They tell us—even giving the very words He used—how He prayed before He raised up Lazarus, before He expelled devils, before multiplying the loaves, in the Garden of Olives, before He yielded up His spirit on the cross ; how He prayed for His persecutors and for His chosen ones. These prayers, together with many others inspired by the Spirit of God, and handed down to us in the Scriptures, are to be found in the liturgy of the Church.

In that great treasury, in which the wise householder has stored up for her children things new and old, we find prayers for every occasion and for every moment ; prayers of adoration, of



impetration, of contrition, of thanksgiving. We should strive to become familiar with them, to commit them to memory, to saturate our spirit with them. In moments of joy, pain or difficulty we should repeat those that best express our emotions. From them we must draw our strength, light and comfort. Is it not for this end that the Holy Spirit inspired them and that the Church has bestowed them on us? The highest wisdom consists in seeking for life and illumination at this source.

It is a matter of great importance that we should accustom ourselves to use the prayers given us by the Church in the Missal and in her other liturgical books. What are called "books of piety" by no means suffice, though they are often very good, and at certain moments helpful; yet they generally weary us in the long run by the exaggeration of their sentiments and the over-emphasis of their expressions. At the best they are never as good as the prayers of Holy Scripture or those of the Fathers of the Church; these alone suit all men, all states, and all times.

But there are times when to pray in set terms is an impossibility; if we attempt to force ourselves to it, the result will be an immense amount of fatigue and no profit. We must always remember that, though prayer expresses itself in words, it is independent of them; it rests not on words, but on the communion of the soul with God. And this union may take place in a silent and passive prayer, a prayer which consists in

a reverent absorption in the presence of God. And whether this happens during Mass, in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, or during meditation, such prayer is very salutary. It brings about the entire and joyful abandonment of the soul to the will of God; its fruits are the conscientious accomplishment of our duties, indulgence and kindness to our neighbour, self-command, humility, calmness and serenity of mind.

It is not possible to apply the counsel of St Paul to "pray without ceasing" to prayer expressed in words, nor to the silent prayer that consists in the reverent absorption of ourselves in the presence of God to the exclusion of all other occupations. The precept contained in the words "pray without ceasing" applies to the whole direction of our lives, to our interior dispositions, to our effort to maintain a constant recollection of the presence of God, to the motives which govern our actions; so that, in the words of St Paul, "Whether we eat or drink, we should do all for the glory of God." That prayer indeed should never cease.

Man has temporal as well as eternal interests, therefore all prayer should aim at union with God by love, not merely in heaven, but, as far as human weakness will allow, on earth also. This is the "one thing needful," which Christ commended Mary, the sister of Martha, for choosing. When we approach Christ by meditation, by recollection or in prayer, our hearts are drawn thereby to love Him. We learn from His divine

words that love does not consist in lip-worship, nor in emotional feelings, but in the fulfilment of the Divine will. When love is the inspiring motive of our actions the yoke of Christ becomes easy to us and His burden light; when it energises all our actions it gives even to the least of them an almost infinite value. Are we not told that to him who gives a cup of cold water in the name of Christ the kingdom of heaven is promised?

“Where your treasure is, there is your heart also.” Christ known and loved in the full acceptance of the words becomes our treasure; we live in Him and He lives in us. The love of Christ excludes from our hearts all baser loves, it will turn our eyes from earthly desires and close our ears to mere human considerations; we shall understand with St Teresa that he for whom God is not sufficient can never hope to be satisfied. God is sufficient for all; He takes hold of the intellect, the heart and the soul; He unites all our faculties to Himself, so that purified from all that is earthly, even while still on earth, we may in a certain way and in a certain measure taste of that which is promised to the pure of heart—we may see God.

Confession and Communion are acts of supreme importance in the spiritual life, and on this account they have been treated of in a vast number of books accessible to all. To repeat here what has been said so admirably and so often would be superfluous, still it may be useful

to give indications on a few points that are sometimes overlooked.

We must always remember that confession is, above all, the sacrament of penance, so that what we have primarily to seek for in it is sorrow for our sins. The relief, consolation and joy that generally result from a good confession are neither its condition nor its aim. They are not to be the objects for which we make our confession, neither should we consciously seek them, or judge of the value of our confessions by them. The best confession is that which is accompanied by the deepest contrition. If we would obtain such contrition, we must not try to escape the humiliation of a full confession, nor strive to spare our self-love. We must confess all our sinful thoughts, words and deeds, but mere fugitive impressions, sentiments, inclinations and temptations should only be confessed when we have ourselves contributed to them. We must confess all our sinful thoughts, words, deeds and our culpable omissions, mentioning when we have voluntarily exposed ourselves to the occasion of sin ; always remembering that involuntary feelings and emotions, however violent or evil, are not sins, but only those thoughts, words and actions to which we fully consented.

Frequent confession is useful and good, but the masters of the spiritual life tell us that long and prolix confessions are hurtful. Those who go very often to confession can hardly confess themselves at any great length without saying

things that, strictly speaking, do not pertain to confession at all. Confessions should be clear, rapid, free from useless narrations or any mention of names.

We ought not to limit our confessions to the simple enumeration of our transgressions; we should endeavour to give our confessor some notion of our natural inclinations and of the thoughts and desires which we believe to have come from the Divine action on our souls. The wish to be saved is universal in all "men of good will"; but the desire of perfection and of a closer following of Christ is a special grace for which we shall have to render a strict account. God's gifts are not distributed equally; from those to whom much has been given much will be expected; if we weigh the graces we have received against the sins we have committed, we shall find much disparity; what may be but a trivial lapse in one case is a grave offence in another. To be unfaithful to the graces we receive is to bury our talent—the fault for which the servant in the parable was so severely punished. So that to be able to understand the case he has to judge, the confessor has to know what graces God may have bestowed on the penitent and what seems to be the Divine purpose in his regard.

Father Mariote, of the Oratory, under whose guidance and advice the school of Zakopane grew up, used to recommend those whom he directed to pray unceasingly for their higher



sanctification, and to repeat many times in the day: "My God, at whatever cost, do Thou sanctify me!" He further advised them, while repeating this prayer, to recall the kind of suffering to which they felt the greatest repugnance. For no sacrifice can be too great to secure that pearl for which we must be ready to give up the whole world. And as the most important thing in confession is that it should move our souls to deep and sincere repentance, we must always be careful to pray earnestly for this salutary grief, and before each confession make this prayer a part of our preparation, including in it a fervent desire to amend our lives. And again, after each confession, in those sacred moments when the atoning blood of Christ has been freshly applied to our souls, and we are specially dear to God, we must renew with still greater fervour our prayers for yet deeper and fuller contrition. *Amplius lava me!* has ever been the supplication of the pardoned penitent. But the timid scrupulosity which makes some people hurry from the confessional to the altar, lest they should commit any sin between the moment of the priest's absolution and that of receiving Holy Communion, is not to be commended; it probably comes from a defective knowledge of the catechism, where the instructions necessary for the proper reception of the sacraments are fully given.

It rests with the confessor to decide when the penitent may communicate. His decision should



be simply and dutifully obeyed ; we should never venture to make our communions more frequent without his authorization, nor should we abstain from communicating as often as he advises under the pretext of our unworthiness. If communion were limited to those worthy to receive our Lord, who would dare to approach ? We venture to do so, not because of our merits, but because God is infinitely merciful, and our all but infinite misery makes His gift needful for us.

Both after confession and communion we should remain in the church, giving up some time to prayer and thanksgiving. After communion especially, above all other times, we should strive to realize the presence of our Divine Master in our souls, speak to Him by short, fervent aspirations, and listen to His voice communicating with us—not by audible words, but by increasing our faith, hope and charity, inciting us to greater sorrow for our sins, to more fervent desires of virtue, by calming our anxieties, consoling us in our sorrows and confirming us in humility and by giving us more light to see ourselves as we really are. To take up a prayer-book and at once begin to read a number of prayers is perhaps the easiest way of keeping our minds recollected after communion ; but surely it is better to speak to our heavenly Father in our own words and our own thoughts than in those of others. It is our own needs and our own difficulties we should lay before Him, not those others may have felt ; it is for

ourselves, not for those who have gone before us, we ask His grace and His help.

In the interior life the direction of a wise and experienced guide is of great help. It is not absolutely necessary that this guide should be an ecclesiastic, but it is necessary that they who guide us should be themselves thoroughly conversant with what they teach. They only can direct others in the paths of the spiritual life who themselves have trodden them, and thus acquired real experience; they only can teach others to subdue their passions who have already conquered their own; or how to struggle against temptation, who themselves overcome the tempter. If our confessor can also be our guide, the gain for our souls will be very great, but St Francis of Sales tells us that we cannot be sure of this once in a hundred times. A very great amount of wisdom and of prudence are needed to safely combine the double office of confessor and of director.

But even if unable to find all we should desire in this respect, we still must labour for our sanctification; much valuable help can be had from religious books. St Francis of Sales tells us that being in his youth for many years deprived of a director, he made great progress in the spiritual life by carefully studying Scupoli's "Spiritual Combat"; and many other saints have found directors in good books.

Among the means which the Church provides to further the sanctification of her children must be reckoned spiritual retreats, in which the

teachings of our Divine Lord are brought vividly before us in an abridged form, by sermons and meditations, during a fixed number of days which should be devoted as continuously to prayer and recollection as our strength will permit. St Ignatius exhorts those who enter retreats to do it with thoroughness, that is, with the utmost energy of mind, and with a firm purpose of making a solitude in our hearts by putting aside all thought, not only of the outer world, but of our personal concerns, cares, occupations and anxieties, save that of getting to understand more thoroughly our duties to God and to ourselves, and of obtaining the graces necessary to enable us to fulfil them better than we have ever done before.

Retreats gone through in this spirit at intervals of one or two years, or when circumstances have arisen obliging us to make some important decision which may affect our spiritual interests, are both salutary and profitable. They help us to discern our vocation in life; through them we may hope to obtain special light and grace in difficult circumstances, for the amendment of our lives, for our confirmation and for the sanctification of our souls. We are called, as Scripture tells, to be "temples of the Holy Ghost"; nowhere do we find better explained the rules we should follow, to build up step by step this spiritual edifice, than in the Exercises of St Ignatius, on the lines of which most retreats are conducted.

Besides these longer annual or biennial retreats, it is an excellent practice to set aside a fixed day of each month to examine how far we have been faithful to our rule of life, and to renew fervently whatever resolutions we may have made. But it is not necessary to devote a whole day to this purpose: a couple of hours should suffice.

Among our religious duties that of assisting with proper dispositions at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass must have a foremost place. Mass is the axle on which the Christian life turns; the Church makes it a matter of obligation on Sundays and holidays, and devout persons cannot be too earnestly exhorted to study in the prescribed manuals all the parts and ceremonies of that solemn act, until they have become perfectly familiar with them. They will thus be enabled to unite their prayers with those of the priest in such a way as to become participators in the sacrifice, and will be preserved from the very great danger of assisting at Mass merely as a pious habit, or as a way of passing their time.

With regard to many other means of obtaining grace, such as joining confraternities, making pilgrimages, etc., it is necessary to take thought and trouble in selecting those which will best promote our sanctification, and of which we shall be able faithfully to perform the prescribed obligations without overcrowding our time, or putting too great a strain on our spiritual strength, or running the risk of neglecting the duties of our state. There is nothing wrong in abstaining

from such practices, but it is a serious fault to undertake obligations we have not strength or leisure to perform properly; very often more harm than good accrues to our souls from taking up these self-imposed duties with feverish haste. But, above all, it behoves us to bear in mind that our work, whether manual, intellectual or spiritual, should never be done in a haphazard, irregular or capricious way. The more carefully we regulate our actions the greater will be their value in God's sight; the greater also the thoroughness with which we shall perform them, and the economy of time and expenditure in the doing of them, and the more equal will be the balance of our mental and spiritual faculties.

God, as we have often said already, does all things in order, and Christ, our master and our model, throughout the whole course of His life on earth, left nothing to chance or to the accident of the moment—each one of His actions had been foreseen and pre-ordained in the Divine decrees. Following His example, let every hour, every place, every faculty we possess, be to us as a messenger recalling some duty allotted to it. This will help us to conquer the sloth natural to our fallen nature, and will bring us under the yoke of discipline which every kind of labour exacts. "The obedient man shall speak of victory." \*

Few things contribute more to our progress in the spiritual work needed for our sanctification than a wise ordering of our time and strict fide-

---

\* Prov. xxi, 28.



lity to the order we have laid down for ourselves. 'Keep your rule, and your rule will keep you,' is an old and valuable maxim of the religious life, and applies as well to the allotment of time among seculars as to the stricter obedience of professed religious; and although it is less binding on the conscience, it must not be put aside for any but serious reasons. They who conscientiously accustom themselves to its yoke will be found, not only under adverse circumstances, such as illness or travel, but even when overtaken by some unexpected calamity, still preserving a certain order and sequence in their daily life. And having thus schooled to submission their naturally indolent, unruly natures, they will have their reward in the calm, the decorum, the presence of mind, the good sense and discrimination which such self-conquest almost invariably produces, and in the economy of time, strength and expenditure which it effects.

When we have convinced ourselves of the importance of living according to a rule, and of the duty of adhering to it strictly, the next step is to implore earnestly the aid of the Holy Spirit in making it. Then we should recall what has been said as to the three divisions of manual, intellectual and spiritual work; if we cannot divide our time equally among them, we should at least reserve some share for each. Care must be exercised not to undertake harder work or more numerous duties than we are reasonably sure we shall be able to fulfil, while a clear distinction



must be made between matters in which it is possible to observe strict punctuality, such as early rising and the hours of meals, etc., and those in which such observance would be injudicious; also between matters that are personal to ourselves, and those in which the comfort and convenience of others have to be considered. We must first think over carefully and then put down in writing how many hours should be given to our household duties, how many to keeping our accounts, to letter-writing, to reading, to prayer and religious exercises and to other things. Then we must fix an hour, or at least a time of day, for each occupation, so that morning, noon and evening should each have its appropriate employment, but none be overcrowded or overburdened.

For prudence requires that we should take stock of our capabilities and of our powers of endurance; working to the full limit of our strength, but by no means beyond it; not neglecting the intervals of rest and recreation needed to make our work steady and fruitful.

A wise labourer does not pet or pamper his horses or his oxen; he feeds them well and is careful not to overwork them, lest they should break down and become useless; and sensible men or women act in the same way, having regard to their own physical, intellectual and spiritual strength. It should also be borne in mind that some persons, the young especially, require a change of occupation, but that with the

elderly the reverse is usually the case. For this reason it is sometimes well to allot our occupations according to fixed days rather than fixed hours, so that each day of the week has its special task, and there probably will remain some matters that only need attention once or twice in the month. The crucial point is that all we do should be done with regularity and order. But before imposing a settled rule of life on ourselves it will be wiser to try it first for a fortnight; some changes may be found necessary.

We are told in Holy Writ that there is "a time to speak and a time to be silent"; and it is of great importance, especially for the building up of the interior life, to spend some portion of each day in solitude, and the rest in the society of others.

No rule can be laid down as to the amount to be allotted to each; this must depend on our own characters and on the circumstances of our lives; but it is certain that the alternations of solitude and society are for the health of the soul what the alternations of day and night, of labour and repose, are for the health of the body, and that intellectual faculties get disordered and out of gear unless the right balance is preserved.

For we need solitude and silence in order to seek and to find the light and strength from above which is to guide our lives aright; while in order to have the opportunity of bringing to flower and fruit the seed sown in solitude, we must mix with our fellows. Again, to increase

our intellectual and spiritual resources, we must have some portion of the day entirely free from interruptions; he who neither seeks nor cares to have a time for recollection will fritter away his mental powers and never rise to the full measure of his capabilities, nor garner for the Great Householder the harvest expected from his hands. To him may be applied the terrible words, "weighed in the balance, he was found wanting."

On the other hand, too much solitude prevents our judgements of men or things having any practical value, for they are not based on experience; it tends to foster foolish conceits, and often leads to dangerous presumption. Prayer, meditation, study, self-improvement, the diligent exercise of our mental faculties, are excellent things, most helpful to salvation. But St Paul has also told us that we must bear each other's burdens,\* and thus laden, follow in the footsteps of Christ. When the occasion arises, we must be ready to come down, not only from Mount Parnassus, but even from Mount Thabor, into the valley of tears below, take on our shoulders the crosses of our suffering brethren, and give up, for the service of our neighbour, our vigils, our thoughts, our hours of silence and solitude.

More than this, he who lives apart from his fellow men can never acquire the most valuable of all knowledge: he can never really

---

\* Gal. vi, 2.

know himself. "He who has not been tempted knows nothing." How can we understand the terrible force of temptations to covetousness, to anger, to jealousy, and to the other passions, if we live in such solitude as to make even their imagery impossible; still less can we fathom the possible depths of our own weakness in combating them. We must mix with our kind to be able even to form an idea of the abysses of our common nature. We know from the gospel teaching that certain talents are given to each one of us—faculties of mind and body, enabling us to render service to our neighbours. If we shut ourselves off from all occasions of doing this, what account shall we be able to render to God at the last? Nor must we fail to observe how often it happens that those who cut themselves off morosely from human intercourse, losing all healthy appreciation of life, of themselves, of others, become eccentric and embittered.

The solitary worker will never reach his highest level unless from time to time he brings the fruit of his labour into the market-place, and honestly compares it with that of others; while he whose work lies amid the busy hum of men should be careful at least to plan it out in surroundings where no tumult will interfere with the concentration of his thoughts. A life passed entirely in solitude and recollection leaves half the faculties unused and atrophied, and is as unprofitable as those high-sounding philosophical systems which

are totally incapable of any practical application. But when contemplation and action are wisely alternated and welded, they gain in strength and in persuasive power, and each completes the other.

Human intercourse has another advantage that is frequently overlooked, sometimes even condemned ; it is that the judgements our neighbours pass on our actions, their sympathies or their antipathies, their praise or their blame, influence us strongly, sometimes indeed for evil, but a thousand times oftener act as salutary deterrents to our evil inclination.

The recollection of God's presence ought to be our surest safeguard against temptation. But, alas ! it is not always so, and many a time it is the presence of our neighbour which keeps us in the straight path. Perchance, when Christ bade us to pray for our enemies, it was not wholly that we might thus exercise the virtues of mercy and forgiveness, but also because we owe a debt that we little dream of to the severe, unsympathetic judgements of those we knew to be criticizing our faults and our shortcomings, and also to those who often helped us very efficaciously by the sight of their faults to correct our own.

Can there be a better preservative against giving way to anger than the sight of a passionate man, whose violent, unsubdued temper makes him oblivious of courtesy to others and of his own personal dignity ? or a better check to sins of the tongue than having to listen to the scan-



dalous gossip of some malevolent busybody? or to selfishness than seeing or suffering from the egotism of those who think of and care for none but themselves? Nor will they be inclined to set too high a value on the world's judgement who have some experience of the venomous tongues of the detractor and the calumniator, or be easily beguiled by flattery who have seen the parasite setting his snares for the vain and credulous; while the exaggerated praise of those who are trying to fool us should serve as a spur, urging us not to fall short of our obvious capabilities. Both the faults and the virtues of our neighbours, if taken in the right spirit, may be to us as steps of the ladder leading to perfection.

Another powerful help in the spiritual life is the society of those who are, like ourselves, working earnestly for sanctification; travellers over the same road, we can reciprocally support, comfort, encourage, advise and admonish one another. Indeed a true Christian friendship may be counted among the greatest of earthly blessings. It has been often remarked that saints rise up in the Church, not often singly, but as a rule in groups or clusters, like the stars in the heavens; where one is shining others will not be far off.

This reciprocity of spiritual aid is doubtless among the reasons for the foundation of the religious orders. St Teresa says that efforts made in common are useful helps towards holiness. And have we not Christ's own words, that where



two or three are gathered together in His name there will He be in their midst?

The processes preceding the canonization of the saints show that in the eyes of the Church the miraculous graces which so attract and fascinate us are often proofs of sanctity, but by no means its necessary result. Holiness consists in virtues, which all of us may acquire, and for which the only absolute condition is an earnest desire for our sanctification, and a will that is at once firm, docile, humble and persevering.

But what all of us need are the virtues of faith, hope and charity. Faith in God and in all that the Church commands us to believe; faith in our redemption, alike personal and national, without which our labours would be of no avail; faith that God will give us the graces without which no enterprise, even if undertaken in His name, can ever succeed; a living and an active faith which will penetrate every detail of our lives and inspire all our actions.

Hope, the second theological virtue, is needful for all, but most of all to us who are poor, persecuted and conquered. "It shall be done to you according to your hope," are the words of Holy Writ. Whenever we are tempted to despair either of our personal sanctification or of the future of our country, let us never lose our hope in God's mercy, but say with Job: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Finally, we need charity: charity which is inseparable from a living faith and a firm hope;

charity which gives us strength to resist, rest when we are exhausted, and is herself never either weary or vanquished.

We also need the four cardinal virtues of Justice, Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude.

Justice, that we may render to every man that which is his due, and thus serve God by obeying His will, serve our country by spreading the knowledge of His kingdom ; and serve ourselves by becoming better and holier.

Prudence, that we may choose right and proper means to attain our ends.

Temperance, that we may use the things of this world only so far as they help in our onward course.

Fortitude, for God has promised a crown of life to him who is faithful unto death.

Finally, we need perseverance, without which all we may have done or suffered will avail us nothing. As we have said before, a passive perseverance, though it has proved the most enduring quality of our race, and though to it we owe our survival as a nation, is yet not sufficient ; we must strive for an active and supernatural perseverance, alike in our work, our study and our prayers. For "he only who perseveres to the end shall be saved."











59788

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



**A** 000 689 393 7

